THE

FAIR IMPOSTOR.

A NOVEL.

Leſſons of wiſdom have never ſo much power over us as when they are wrought into the heart, through the ground-work of ſome ſtory which engages our paſſions.

STERNE.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

Printed for T. HOOKHAM and J. CARPENTER,
Old and New Bond-Street.

1792.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE

FAIR IMPOSTOR.

The Counteſs DE LAUSAN *to Sir* HENRY MOUBRAY.

Paris.

BUT that you have ſo many vexations and diſtreſſes to torment and afflict you, my good Couſin, I would indulge my propenſity to ſcold you. Was ever any thing half ſo cruel as to excite my curioſity in a very powerful degree, and then tell me very compoſedly, becauſe

you are acquainted with the ſecret in queſtion, that time will explain the myſtery? I do believe, that finding yourſelf peeviſh, for ſo I vow you were when you wrote, (for the firſt time in your life, I muſt *do you the juſtice* to believe) you reſolved to *enforce my ſympathy* on the occaſion, and make me as pettiſh as yourſelf. What can this myſtery be? the letter not written by Mademoiſelle de St. Clair, yet it is to her he is attached, certainly; who elſe could have written it, and for what purpoſe? Madame de St. Clair ſent it too; ſure the Marquis did not write it, to give a favorable opinion of his miſtreſs? Oh, no, no, that could not be, becauſe it diſcovered their attachment, and was the cauſe of her confinement. Well, *I don't care*, as I uſed to ſay, when I was a little naughty girl, I won't puzzle my brain any more about it, there can be no harm, becauſe you are concerned in it; there's a pretty compliment: don't it heap coals of fire

on

on your head? But not to be righteous overmuch, leſt I ſhould be too good for this wicked world, I muſt indulge a little revenge: be it known to you that I have ſecrets alſo, *reſpecting you*, very intereſting too; but I won't ſay another word—now learn to do as you would be done by, Couſin of mine. We are all buſtle here, preparing for the Marquis's nuptials; they are to be celebrated at Paris. It appears rather odd, I think, that Madame de St. Clair has never written to acknowledge a very handſome letter ſent by the Ducheſs, ſignifying her ſatisfaction on the removal of the obſtacles to the union of their children; the Marquis has made her apologies, it is true, and ſatisfied her Grace, but I own, I am ſurpriſed and concerned; I think the Ducheſs's conduct required a more marked return of gratitude than has been ſhewn. The Marquis ſays, they wait the Baron de Vernieul's arrival, to empower Madame de St. Clair to in-

form the Duke and Ducheſs of his intentions and opinions; but I think ſhe might have written a letter of thanks.—You may be ſure this ſentiment is only given to yourſelf; as no diſſatisfaction is expreſſed by the parties concerned, I ſhall not infuſe any doubts—indeed, the preſents they are preparing mark they are not diſpleaſed. I won't vex you with deſcriptions of preparations for the occaſion; you have already been too much plagued by ſuch *mal-à-propos* occurrences. I am ſo far from being ſurpriſed at the reports you mention of your approaching union with Lady Auguſta Mortimer, that I do aſſure you I fully expect to ſee it announced in the newſpapers ere long. I wiſh *the World* reported nothing on ſlighter foundation, many an innocent character would eſcape ruin, and many an innocent heart be ſaved the wound of unmerited contempt—there really is now, *you muſt allow*, ſuch *uncommon* good ground for this report.

report. Is not Miſs Melcombe handſome, and Lady Auguſta is reported to be ſo? Has ſhe not been ſeen with Lady Moubray? And have you not been with them to chuſe cloaths? Upon my word you are too ſevere in your cenſure. Can there be more than one handſome woman in the world? (aſk a lover.) Can any woman but Lady Auguſta be of Lady Moubray's parties? or can any body give their judgement on nuptial preparations but the parties concerned? To be ſure not; the world are certainly right: it is ſtrange, you will not think you are going to be married, will not allow yourſelf the happieſt man in the world. But I beg pardon for running on in this ſtile, ſo ill adapted to your preſent feelings. I have a wonderful flow of ſpirits juſt now; ſurrounded by happy objects, my heart participates their ſentiments, and imbibes ſatisfaction from contemplating it in others. I will yet hope that I may ſome time or other have it in my power

to teſtify this *ſympathy* in your felicity; as I find my humour ſo ill-adapted to ſoothe you, for I cannot repreſs the joy that plays now round my heart, I will conclude, till I become more congenial in my diſpoſition. But though on all other ſubjects I feel the neceſſity of ſubduing my animation, I will not reſtrain it in the profeſſion of my regard. Believe me, therefore, dear Sir Henry,

With the utmoſt eſteem,

And moſt fervent good wiſhes,

Your faithful friend,

CLARA DE LAUSAN.

The Marquis DE BEAUMONT *to Sir* HENRY MOUBRAY.

Chateau de Villars-Coteret.

WOULD you were here, dear Moubray---never did my heart ſo much require a friend to unfold itſelf to; new vexa-

vexations continually ariſe; I feel them the more, as I had every reaſon to think the path to happineſs was now cleared of every obſtruction. To have the cup near one's lips, and have it ſnatched away ſo perpetually, is indeed well depicted as one of the torments of Tartarus. The Baron's abſence, till now, ſeemed the obſtacle to my wiſhes; but his arrival, from its conſequences, bids fair to protract their accompliſhment as much as his delay in coming. By ſome means or other he is become acquainted with Julia's confinement, which he gave Madame de St. Clair notice of, when the emotions occaſioned by their affecting meeting were ſubſided in ſome degree. He was very particular in his inquiries, and ſeemed infinitely more intereſted about her than one ſhould have ſuppoſed poſſible, as he has never ſeen her. There is ſome myſtery in this—ſhe has certainly found means to write to him. Madame de St. Clair preſented me as one of her

beſt friends; his reception was not conformable to my opinion of what ſuch an introduction required; but as I ſaw Madame was hurt, I took no notice; I am reſolved, however, to ſeek an explanation. He is certainly prepoſſeſſed by Julia; his reſerve will make my part difficult of announcing my affection for Victoria. I muſt change my plan, I believe, and leave to Madame de St. Clair the taſk of managing the old gentleman. I own I could not brook any hauteur, or heſitation, on his part.

Madame de St. Clair ſent to requeſt ſhe might ſpeak to me as I was concluding the laſt ſentence: I attended her; ſhe was agitated and confuſed; I felt much for her; ſhe began to apologize for what ſhe was going to communicate; ſaid, ſhe hoped I would not be offended, it aroſe not from herſelf---it was the ſuggeſtion of a mind unacquainted with my virtues:

virtues: ſhe had ſuffered extreme miſery of late, as I knew, hoped I would not augment it by what was calculated to grieve her much, taking exceptions at any word, or act of her's; but conſider how ſhe was circumſtanced. Having the welfare of her children at heart, ſhe muſt, for the promotion of their intereſts, concede to thoſe, who might and were inclined to ſerve them extenſively. I aſſured her my perfect knowledge of her character, ſympathy in her ſufferings, and reſpect for the motives that actuated her, would preclude the poſſibility of my being offended by any thing ſhe could ſay. Re-aſſured by this, ſhe proceeded to tell me, that ſhe had juſt held a converſation with her brother-in-law reſpecting Julia: he was appriſed of my having addreſſed her, through what means he would not ſay, only affirming it was not from his niece, or with her knowledge, and that I had uſed her ill. She aſſured him of the contrary, and that Julia had

not been condemned but on full proof. He was not ſatisfied, however; obſerving, (what, I own, I honour him for, though it throws an obſtacle of new delay in the way of my wiſhes) that ſhe had a right to a fair trial; he found ſhe was ignorant of the charge brought againſt her; had no opportunity of ſaying any thing in her defence; ſhe ſhould be at leaſt told her crime, and, if ſhe required it, confronted with her accuſer. It had been ſuggeſted to him, and the obſervation had ſunk deep into his mind, that the whole tenor of her conduct throughout life ſhould be examined, and adduced in proof, of the likelihood of her being capable of any atrocious deed; that it was unlikely, one whoſe behaviour had acquired her univerſal affection and reſpect, a few *intereſted* individuals excepted, ſhould be guilty of any thing eſſentially wrong: it would be found, on inquiry, that Julia's character was among thoſe which inſpire the more reſpect as they

they are the more examined. Theſe circumſtances conſidered, he had thought it right to inquire of his niece if ſhe deſired an explanation; if ſhe was conſcious of her guilt, ſhe would ſhrink from it, and that proof would be ſufficient: did ſhe ſeek it, ſhe was intitled, in his opinion, to a candid hearing. As ſoon, therefore, as he had recovered the fatigue of his journey, and arranged ſome family affairs with me, he would go and viſit his niece at the Convent. If the Marquis was the amiable character he was repreſented, he would naturally acquieſce in the juſtneſs of this, and approve his determination of going himſelf to converſe with Julia on the ſubject. Thoſe who were conſcious their conduct would bear a ſcrutiny, were ever ſolicitous to challenge the truth. This, added Madame de St. Clair, is the ſubſtance of the Baron's converſation. I am ſo well convinced of your rectitude, and the proof you have is ſo full, that I am concerned

the

the point ſhould be queſtioned; as it ſeems to accuſe you, however, I am, at the ſame time, diſpoſed to think the Baron's obſervations in general juſt; and though his reſearches muſt confirm the painful truth of Julia's treachery on this occaſion, I cannot object to them. Tell me your opinion, my dear Sir.—A bluſh, which I ſcarcely knew the ſource of, tinged my countenance at this application; wounded pride, at being obnoxious to ſuſpicion, had a ſhare in producing it, I believe; and ſomething, like the reproach of conſcience, though I could hardly account for it, ſeemed to enter into its occaſion—I had not injured any body. I had deceived—but then a fair retort, as I conſidered it, juſtified me. I could not help wiſhing, however, that I had attended to your advice, my dear friend—my feelings then convinced me we never quit the path of plain-dealing with impunity. I told Madame de St. Clair, that though I was naturally a little hurt at the Baron's implied

plied ſuſpicion, I was too much inclined to juſtice, and too ſure of my ground, to object to his propoſal; that, for his niece's ſake, I had wiſhed the matter to be as little known as poſſible; but if ſhe deſired an explanation, I was ready to give it at any time, and in the preſence of any perſon. Madame de St. Clair repeated her apologies, for her family being the cauſe of uneaſineſs to me, to whom they were ſo greatly indebted; but ſhe was ſo circumſtanced with her brother-in-law, and there appeared ſo much juſtice in what he propoſed, that ſhe could not refuſe a compliance. I gave her every aſſurance poſſible of my being perfectly ſatisfied on her account, and we ſeparated better friends than ever. I am ſo ſure Julia will never ſtand the teſt, that I have no apprehenſions of Madame de St. Clair's diſcovering what I was influenced to conceal from her, otherwiſe I own, though I thought my counterplot juſtifiable at the time, I ſhould now feel extremely hurt at

the diſcloſure of my having made uſe of any deception: Madame de St. Clair's good opinion and confidence in me render me ſtill more uneaſy on this point. I have not yet ſeen my Victoria—ſhe is gone out, I find: I ſhall conceal the vexation this buſineſs gives me from her; becauſe, as I acted from her opinion, her ſweet mind may reproach her with having occaſioned me uneaſineſs; you will be anxious, I know, to learn the reſult of this buſineſs, I ſhall not, therefore, ſend this till it is decided.

My mind is in ſuch an agitation, my dear friend, from a circumſtance which has juſt occurred, that I ſcarcely know what I do or ſay; only to yourſelf can I confide it, and I hope the communication will compoſe my mind. When I had done writing, I went in ſearch of my Victoria; I learned ſhe had walked out ſome time ſince, and was gone towards the

town:

town: ſuppoſing her brother might give me ſome tidings of her, I directed my ſteps towards Madame Nivelon's---was told there, that Louis was in the garden; I followed, and not finding him in the walks, aſcended the ſteps of a pavilion: opening the door haſtily, I diſcovered————I cannot explain; but ſuffice it, that the reports of the neighbourhood, and my ſuſpicions, were but too well grounded. You will imagine I ſhut the door more ſpeedily even than I opened it; and, ſcarcely knowing what I did, rather flew than walked back to the Caſtle. I believe I had a glimpſe of Victoria as I paſſed through the hall; but, in the ſtate of my mind, did not deem it right to addreſs her. I hardly knew how to act. I would not expoſe the woman, at the ſame time, muſt take ſome means of preventing any farther intercourſe between her and my Victoria, whom ſhe has ſo greatly impoſed on. I think it will be beſt to write to her; yes, I will inſtantly addreſs her.

The

The following is a copy of my letter; I have diſpatched the original by my valet; I could not reſt till I had taken ſome ſtep in the buſineſs.

"MADAM,

"MY deſire to acquaint you with the part I mean to take, in relation to my diſcovery this morning, is little inferior to what your ſolicitude will be to learn my determination---That you are deſirous to preſerve your reputation, though you chuſe not to practiſe the virtues that intitle you to it, is evident from your taking ſuch pains to impoſe on your amiable aſſociate Mademoiſelle de St. Clair; my diſcoveries, therefore, I will conceal, if you accede to the conditions I propoſe: No longer to ſeek her ſociety, whom your conduct has rendered you ſo unworthy of aſſociating with, or to encourage the extravagant generoſity of Louis de St. Clair. If you comply with theſe requiſitions,

your

your ſecret ſhall be ever concealed by me; and I will hope, that reflection may lead you to repent of the crime you have been guilty of.

I am,

Madam,

Your humble ſervant,

CHARLES DE BEAUMONT.

When you conſider how contemptible this woman is, from the mercenary proofs ſhe exhibits, you will not think I have been too harſh with her. I muſt now dreſs for dinner; my agitated feelings are tranquillized by this communication.—Adieu for the preſent.

I have juſt had a converſation with my adorable Victoria, that has filled my heart with ſuch rapture in the teſtimony it gave of her affection, that I ſhall grow wild, I believe, if I do not give utterance to my feelings. Obſerving her extremely agi-

tated

tated during dinner, and that ſhe ſcarcely eat any thing, I was extremely uneaſy, and took an opportunity of requeſting ſhe would contrive to let me have half an hour's converſation with her alone: it was what ſhe ſought—we therefore arranged it. When we met, ſhe informed me that her mother had hinted to her a ſuſpicion of my affection, and that ſhe apprehended an obſtacle in the Baron's miſconception of my conduct: this, continued my Victoria, will prove a new cauſe of delay, if not of ſeparating us. I am rather inclined to think, from what I have obſerved, that you are appriſed of this, though out of kindneſs to me you concealed it. I have hence been led to reflect and determine on a plan which I have reaſon to believe will meet your concurrence; it was ſuggeſted by my deſire to promote your happineſs, my dear Marquis—I am perfectly ſatisfied of your affection, and know the ſufferings you have endured from the obſtacles and delays that have ſo continually oppoſed our union; the principal

cipal bar is removed: your friends conſent to our marriage, my mother would prefer you to every other perſon for a ſon-in-law, and theſe are the only perſons who have a right to interfere: convinced that you have no intereſted motives, it will be immaterial to you that my uncle is diſpleaſed, and thence withholds his approbation or his fortune—he has imbibed an injurious prejudice againſt you, theſe are rarely, if ever, removed in old people—he may reject you or prolong matters ſo as to occaſion you much miſery. From all theſe conſiderations I am influenced to propoſe a plan which only my ſenſe of your affection, and deſire to promote your happineſs could have inſpired; it is, that we ſhould be privately contracted; it will not then be in any body's power to ſeparate us. Tranſported with this proof of affection in my adorable miſtreſs, and convinced by it how entirely my felicity was the object of her conſideration, I poured out the effuſions of my gratitude

and

and joy at her feet; if my expreſſion did juſtice to my feelings, ſhe would be convinced how ſenſible I was to her goodneſs. She then ſpoke of entruſting Madame Nivelon with our plan, as ſhe could aſſiſt us in the proſecution of it. I waved this for reaſons I promiſed to give hereafter, which would be very ſatisfactory, aſſuring her, at the ſame time, there was no neceſſity for any body's ſervices. I would go to a notary in the morning, and my own people, whoſe fidelity I could rely on, would be witneſſes; the matter could thus be ſettled without loſs of time, or riſk of diſcovery. She was perfectly ſatisfied with this ſcheme, and thus ſecure of being ſoon mine, beyond the power of any body to ſeparate, ſhe gave me thoſe endearing but innocent marks of tenderneſs ſhe had hitherto ſcrupulouſly withheld; my happineſs was indeſcribable. The voluptuary who anticipates his wiſhes counteracts himſelf; he deſtroys the felicity he ſolicits, deprives himſelf

of

of the ſweeteſt portion of enjoyment. Never has the man taſted complete happineſs who has not ſubmitted to the reſtrictions of virtue, and whoſe mind is not conſcious to the ſweet influence of ſentiment. When ſentiment is the genuine offſpring of a pure and delicate feeling, what an unſpeakable charm does it convey to every object on which its ſweet power is exerciſed! Though its contemptible counterfeit, the child of faſtidiouſneſs and affectation, would bring it into diſgrace, though the ſhaft of ridicule has been pointed at it by thoſe whoſe minds were incapable of feeling its value; yet in vain would they deprive it of its power —ever will it be admired, ever be cheriſhed by the ſenſible mind, and the feeling heart. Judge your influence over me, my dear friend, from the proof I give of writing, when my thoughts have ſuch a delightful aſſemblage of objects to contemplate (I ſteal the ſmall and ſilent hour to devote to you). I wiſh to

cloſe

cloſe this packet that I may ſend it in the morning—a few words more ere I conclude. It may occur to you from the communications of this, that I am inconſiſtent or weak in my reſolutions, ſince I have regretted employing deception, or deviating from the direct path, and yet am on the point of engaging in a tranſaction that ſhuns the face of day: to account for this I muſt impart my ſecret opinions on this buſineſs, however delighted with the proſpect of ſecuring my beloved miſtreſs. I aſſure you I feel great repugnance to enter into any ſcheme that requires concealment; but as I cannot, from the nature of the circumſtances, acquaint her with the Baron's ſuſpicions, and that thence the impediment will be only tranſient, I muſt acquieſce; beſides, it might appear that I was actuated by intereſted motives if I ſuggeſted that we had better wait her uncle's conſent: this I could not bear, therefore I am overruled. Convinced on the ſtricteſt exa-

mination

mination of my heart that it has no deſire to act contrary to the dictates of rectitude or ſincerity; though impelled to conſent to concealment, I give myſelf up to the delightful idea of ſoon making Victoria mine for ever. Your friend ſubſcribes himſelf,

The happieſt of men,

CHARLES DE BEAUMONT.

VICTORIA DE ST. CLAIR *to Madame* NIVELON.

I WRITE, deareſt Nivelon, in an agitation of ſpirits that ſo affects my whole frame, as hardly to leave me power to trace a letter. I have been at your houſe to conſult you in reſpect to the cauſe, but could not ſee you; never did I want the advice or aſſiſtance of ſuch a friend as yourſelf more: my recollection and wonted preſence of mind have almoſt

forſaken me; I will give you a ſketch of the circumſtances that produced this diſorder in my ſoul: I overheard this morning a converſation that paſſed between my mother and the Marquis, in which ſhe informed him that my meddling uncle, prepoſſeſſed by ſomebody in favour of Julia, reſolved to give her an opportunity of vindicating herſelf by confronting her with her accuſers; if this takes place, I am loſt—yet how to avoid it! help me, like a true friend, in this diſtreſſing criſis, dear Nivelon; deviſe ſome ſcheme to elude the impending blow, which will cruſh every hope of my advancement and your's, juſt as they had gained completion. A few days, perhaps leſs, and I am loſt—ſend me your advice *immediately*, if you love me. I muſt compoſe my mind, and try to reflect.

A propitious idea has viſited me; I will pretend to the Marquis that my mother

ther apprehends an objection on the part of my uncle, affect to desire, in pity of his sufferings, to prevent any farther delay, and propose, as a test of my affection, our being privately contracted immediately; this can be done at your house. I know he will consent, because I shall hint something of his not being actuated by interested views in waiting my uncle's consent; this will overpower any sentimental scruples his present determinations of acting openly in future might lead him to make, and his fear of giving me uneasiness will prevent his hinting at the Baron's suspicions, as they would glance at me, while his delicacy and affection will strengthen his repugnance to opposing my proposition.—Yes, this will do. You shall learn my success: if any new thought strikes you on the subject, inform me, dear Nivelon; perhaps you may strike out something better than this. Adieu for the present: I hope, my dear,

we ſhall both ride in our coach and ſix ſoon..

Ever affectionately your's,

VICTORIA DE ST. CLAIR.

The Marquis DE BEAUMONT *to Sir* HENRY MOUBRAY.

Chateau de Villars-Coteret.

FROM the concluſion of my laſt, my dear friend, you will expect me to demand your congratulations; I do, but from a very different cauſe to what you will imagine influences my claim. Oh, Moubray! I thought myſelf on the point of becoming the happieſt of men, whereas I was on the brink of a precipice which would have ingulphed my felicity, my fame, for ever; hence I demand your congratulations: ſtill do I tremble at the danger I have been in, ſtill doubt the poſſeſſion of my ſenſes—How eventful have been theſe laſt two days! the diſ-

coveries

coveries they have produced, the changes they have wrought, are ſo wonderful, that the more I conſider them, the more I am amazed, confounded, and diſturbed; hardly does reaſon preſerve her power, when I would retrace the various and agitating tranſactions that have occurred. Never can I be ſufficiently thankful to Providence—had I been the arbiter of my own fate, had my wiſhes been accompliſhed, I had now been the moſt wretched of men, the object of pity to my friends, contempt to my enemies, and cenſure to the world. But I will endeavour to be more collected, and give you an account of the events which have taken place ſince I wrote. The morning I diſpatched my laſt to you, I went to a notary who reſides in the town, he was gone from home for a few days, and as I did not chuſe to confide my buſineſs to any body but himſelf, I was obliged to wait. Mademoiſelle de St. Clair expreſſed much vexation from the delay, which ſtill

flattered me more, as imputing it to her affection; on the ſame evening I received an anſwer from Madame Nivelon, the following is a copy of it:

" SIR,

" Utterly at a loſs to account for the cauſe of the haughty and inſolent letter you have been pleaſed to addreſs to me, I ſhould, by my ſilence, have marked my contempt of you and your conditions, did I not think you merited a return you will feel more ſeverely. I will therefore acquaint you, that it is in my power to deſtroy that idol you have ſet up to worſhip, and ridiculouſly expect all the world to bend the knee to, becauſe ſhe is *honoured* by *your approbation*. Know, that far from yielding the ſuperiority to her you ſo ſuperciliouſly demand, it is *I* that deem *her* unworthy my acquaintance; and ſhould, though I were guilty of the *crimes* you impute to me, and ſo impertinently

deſire

deſire me to repent of. It is my turn now to impoſe conditions; hear them: if I find you preſume to attempt the ſullying my fame by the breath of cenſure, I will expoſe you and your Dulcinea to the contempt you deſerve. Adieu."

Never, I think, during the courſe of my life, was I agitated by ſo many contending paſſions as this epiſtle produced. Surpriſe, indignation, contempt, and horror, aſſailed me on viewing the daring wickedneſs and wonderful aſſurance diſplayed by this abandoned woman. In the impulſe of my rage I ſnatched up a pen, and wrote the following lines.

"Your letter evinces your having reached the utmoſt pitch of infamy, I therefore keep no terms with you; in vain, Madam, will you deny to the world what with ſuch unparalleled effrontery you have attempted to diſprove to me, though the evidence of my own ſenſes con-

victed you—your character will condemn you—one leſs eſtabliſhed than mine would obtain credit in a charge brought againſt you. Your abſurd threat to expoſe my Victoria, inſpires equal contempt with your threat againſt myſelf—our conduct puts it out of your power to charge us, with truth, of any breach of rectitude; and *your* falſehoods are the leaſt likely to gain credit of any body's, ſince your character is, of all others, the moſt deſpiſed."

I diſpatched this inſtantly; the expreſſion of my indignation gave me ſome relief, but much perturbation yet remained. The greater part of my diſquietude aroſe from the woman's contemptuous treatment of my *adored miſtreſs*; I never entertained the moſt diſtant idea of her attempting to put her threats in execution, not ſuppoſing it in her power. I conſidered theſe expreſſions merely as the impotent ravings of an enraged woman,

and

and concluded I ſhould not hear any more of her. Deſirous to conceal my emotions from the family, particularly from Victoria, fearing to make her unhappy, I ordered my horſes, and rode out to recompoſe my mind againſt the time that the family aſſembled. Having obtained this point in ſome degree, I joined the party at dinner, and ſucceeded ſo well in conquering my agitation, that, except once being charged with gravity, my conduct did not challenge animadverſion. Victoria queſtioned me on the ſubject in the evening, but I eluded confeſſion, by imputing my uneaſineſs to diſappointment at the notary's abſence—this had, indeed, a ſhare in my vexation. Late in the evening I was called out—I found Madame Nivelon's femme-de-chambre, who gave me a ſmall box—I was extremely curious to know the contents, but ſuppoſing it might contain a letter from her which would ruffle my temper, I reſolved to defer opening it till I retired for the night; I therefore de-

poſited it in my bureau, and returned to the company. My curioſity, however, I will confeſs, made me very reſtleſs; hence I pleaded the head-ach as an excuſe for retiring early. I applied immediately to my bureau, and as I was opening it, the thought ſtruck me, that the box muſt contain Louis's preſents. I was vexed with myſelf, then, for having quitted Mademoiſelle de St. Clair; however, I opened the caſket to ſee if Madame Nivelon had favoured me with another of her agreeable epiſtles. I was ſomewhat ſupriſed to find only papers written in Victoria's hand—but ſhort and trifling was this emotion of aſtoniſhment—it was ſucceeded by a ſenſation ſo powerful, that my faculties were for a while overwhelmed—I found a correſpondence arranged regularly of Victoria de St. Clair with Madame Nivelon. I had not read many pages ere I diſcovered that the woman I had adored, for whom I had ſuffered ſuch anguiſh, had plunged my family in ſuch miſery, and for whom I had immolated one of the

loveliest and most amiable victims nature ever formed, that her whom I had considered as an angel, was the most unprincipled, artful, diabolical characters ever existed. Overpowered by the various sensations that assailed me, I set above an hour lost to every recollection; a sort of stupor seized me—I did not lose my senses, but they became useless to me. I recognized no object, nor was conscious to an idea. I know not when I should have recovered from this, had not Dubois entered the apartment to know if I chose to retire for the night. I started from my seat, and recovering my recollection, told him I wanted to write, and should therefore be glad of other lights, and he might then go to rest, as I should not require his farther services. When he was got rid of, I again set myself to examine the papers. Never was plan so deeply contrived, or artfully carried on, as that which now unfolded itself to me; this female Machiavel had turned every circumstance so

much to her advantage, had ſhewn a mind ſo adapted to manage a plot of the kind, by poſſeſſing the utmoſt diſſimulation, quickneſs, and recollection, and ſo utterly void of principle, that a wiſer being than myſelf might have been her dupe. Still is the impreſſion of what I felt, from the peruſal of theſe letters, ſo ſtrong on my mind, that I am obliged to lay down my pen, as the recapitulation revives them. The ſufferings of my parents, your opinion and advice, my reſentment of them, the wrongs of the lovely Julia, all preſent themſelves at once to my imagination, till nature ſhudders, and horror ſeizes me from the remembrance of the paſt, and the idea of my being ſo near ruin, infamy, and madneſs.

Again I reſume the pen, to ſatisfy the anxious deſire you will have, dear Moubray, to learn the conſequence of my diſcovery: you will judge, that many hours elapſed before I was ſufficiently collected to form any plan of conduct. The

morning, in fact, dawned before I had conſidered the neceſſity of reflecting what ſteps I had beſt take. Long was I ere I could deviſe, or decide, on any that ſeemed eligible; at length I reſolved to unfold the whole buſineſs to the Baron, and be guided by his advice. As his niece was but lately known to him, his tenderneſs could not have gained ſo much ſtrength as to make the intelligence ſo affecting as it would otherwiſe be; his knowledge and underſtanding would lead him to judge of the beſt meaſures to be taken, and he would break the matter beſt to poor Madame de St. Clair; beſides theſe, another reaſon influenced me—my character could be cleared to him, and his ſuſpicions done away. I, therefore, concluded on ſending him a note, to ſignify that I wanted to impart ſomething of the utmoſt conſequence to him; and for reaſons I would hereafter explain, I wiſhed the communication to be made at any other place than in the Chateau, (as

I found

I found from the laſt letter of Mademoiſelle de St.Clair, that ſhe contrived to overhear private converſations;) therefore, if he approved it, I would meet him at ten o'clock at the Notary's, where care ſhould be taken by my people to prepare an apartment for us. The Baron is an early riſer, thence my note was delivered without exciting obſervation. He wrote me for anſwer, that he would be ready to attend me. I found it impoſſible to meet the family—to have ſeen Victoria, would, I believe, have robbed me of my ſenſes. It was neceſſary, however, to account for my abſence, to elude her ſuſpicion, as I knew not what the Baron's determination would be. I, therefore, wrote her a billet, to ſay that my impatience for the Notary's return was ſo great, that I ſhould take a ride to the place where he was, to expedite his coming. Leaving this, and a verbal meſſage for Madame de St. Clair, I mounted my horſe, and taking a circuit round the town, left

him

him at a ſmall inn, where, having alſo taken ſome refreſhment, which I greatly needed, I proceeded o the Notary's, and there waited for the Baron. He was punctual. My agitation, and the difficulty I found in opening ſo delicate a matter to him, were better preparations to him than the moſt elaborate diſcourſe I could have compoſed for the occaſion; he was, therefore, leſs ſhocked than I could have expected. He afterwards ſaid, he knew there was ſome wrong doings—he could not decide where, and this leſſened his ſurpriſe at the buſineſs. You will judge what my feelings were while he read the letters, for he went through them without giving an opinion, except by the utterance of an indignant ejaculation, or a ſevere epithet on Victoria, now and then.—At the concluſion of them he aroſe, and relieved my anxious ſuſpenſe by approaching and offering me his hand. "I have your pardon to ſoli-
"cit, my dear Sir," ſaid the worthy old man;

man; "my ſuſpicions have wronged "you—I imputed that breach of inte- "grity to you which was the work of my "niece; as, like yourſelf, I have been "miſled, I truſt you will conſider me en- "titled to your excuſe. At your age, "the power of a woman you loved and "reſpected are ſo great, that it is not "wonderful ſhe ſhould have influenced "you to be guilty of ſome errors: you "have, however, amply atoned for them "by your ſufferings and return to recti- "tude—I have erred in judging, and "ſuſpecting from appearances, we muſt "agree to exchange forgiveneſſes, and "then proceed to debate on this ſad bu- "ſineſs." Charmed with the candour, and the kindneſs of the Baron, I embra- ced him with all the fervour of filial af- fection, begging he would allow me the honour of ranking him among the num- ber of my friends, and promiſing to en- deavour to render myſelf worthy the diſ- tinction. He was pleaſed with the re-

queſt,

queſt, ſaying, I had put it out of his power to deny it, by commanding his regard and eſteem. We then returned to the ſubject of the letters, to reſolve on what meaſures were to be taken. The Baron ſaid it was ſo nice a point to manage, that he muſt give a day to deliberate on it; and as he rather thought diſſimulation was not my forte, that the ſight of his niece muſt be very painful to me, he would recommend my ſending ſome excuſe for my detention from the Caſtle, and remain at Villars-Coteret: he would, if I pleaſed, meet me at the ſame place the next day, to communicate the plan he ſhould form, and the ſteps we had beſt take. This ſettled, I requeſted him to inform me, if not inconſiſtent with any engagement to the contrary, how he became acquainted with Julia's confinement, and ſo intereſted for her. A deep ſigh burſt involuntarily from me as I pronounced her name, from the conſideration of the injuries ſhe had ſuſtained, and

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the ſufferings ſhe had been ſuch a cruel victim to. The Baron ſaid he was under no reſtrictions, but what he was empowered to diſpenſe with at his own option; he would therefore inform me, that he owed his intelligence to Julia's friend Louiſa de Rancé; ſhe had obtained permiſſion of the relation with whom ſhe reſides to meet him, and had introduced herſelf at the inn, two ſtages from Villars-Coteret; ſhe had there, he ſaid, given ſuch a ſenſible account of the family of Madame de St. Clair, and ſuch an intereſting deſcription of his niece Julia, as had produced the effect I had witneſſed. Louiſa's judicious obſervations had prejudiced him greatly in her favour, and he concluded the character muſt be amiable which could inſpire a friendſhip ſo fervent as that evinced by Louiſa's animated exertions. What farther confirmed his good opinion was a ſight of Julia's letters; they depicted a mind ſo richly endowed, and ſo amiable,

that

that no doubt could remain of her innocence. From Louiſa's knowledge of Victoria's character, and the reflections ſhe had made on Julia's communications, ſhe was perſuaded her friend's ſufferings were occaſioned by her ſiſter, and ſhe thought, from the face of things, I had acted unworthily; but this was not abſolutely aſcertained; for Julia had been ſo ſtrictly guarded, in her laſt confinement, as to make any correſpondence between them impoſſible; ſhe would not therefore decide, though appearances were ſo much againſt me: ſhe had marked my attentions to Victoria, and had witneſſed my profeſſions to Julia; the letters too of that amiable girl appeared to prove my apparent duplicity. The Baron, perceiving how much I felt theſe obſervations, haſtened to remark how ſingular it was, that affection and malice ſhould have prompted the uſe of the ſame means to gratify them. Louiſa had ſhewn her Couſin's letters to prove her goodneſs—

as

as Madame Nivelon had done her correſpondent's, to gratify her revenge, and expoſe her confidant. The Baron added, that he had promiſed Louiſa to take the earlieſt opportunity in his power to obtain Julia's liberty, and an inveſtigation of the charges brought againſt her; the delight and gratitude ſhe marked from this aſſurance ſtill heightened his eſteem for her, and they parted much pleaſed with each other. I now ſuggeſted to the Baron the anxious ſolicitude that poſſeſſed my mind, from the conſideration that every hour, which continued the confinement of this ſweet injured ſufferer, was an addition to the cruelty and injuſtice I had been an innocent inſtrument of having inflicted; I, therefore, intreated ſome expedient might be immediately adopted, for relieving her mind, if it was not poſſible to obtain her liberty. The Baron was much pleaſed at the energy with which I enforced this natural requeſt: conſidering a few minutes, he

he ſaid, he would himſelf go to the Abbaye, and conſole his niece, by informing her, in general terms, that her ſorrows were at an end, in what reſpected her confinement and its cauſe; for that, in a day or two, ſhe ſhould be brought home, and every teſtimony ſhe could wiſh given of her innocence and rectitude. He inſtantly ordered his carriage, and I hinted to him, that I thought it would be a great conſolation to Julia to have her friend with her. He thanked me fervently for the recollection, and ſaid he would call on her. After ſome farther converſation on the matter, and his promiſing to meet me the next day, to communicate his farther proceedings, he took a moſt friendly leave of me, and ſtepped into his carriage. I then ſat down to write my excuſes to Madame de St. Clair and her daughter, for my abſence, and ſent, at the ſame time, a private order to Dubois to attend me. When he arrived, I employed him to procure

me

me apartments in ſome adjacent houſe—this was ſoon accompliſhed; and, having taken a ſlight meal, I immediately ſat down to give you an account of the ſtrange and various occurrences of the laſt two days. However tired I may be of holding my pen, and ſenſible to the fatigue of body and mind, induced by my having paſſed a ſleepleſs night; and being agitated beyond all deſcription, from the conflicts I have ſuffered, I will not conclude till I have apologized to you, dear Moubray, for the conduct I was influenced to obſerve towards you. I now feel the full force of your remark on the judgement we ſhould form of a perſon's character from the doctrine they inculcate. I ſhould have ſuſpected Mademoiſelle de St. Clair, from the whole tenor of the conduct ſhe influenced me to adopt—but I was faſcinated. When you ſee her letters you will not wonder, however, at my being deceived. She gave ſuch a falſe colouring to every object, repre-

repreſented every circumſtance through ſuch a falſe medium, that I muſt have been as ſuſpicious as ſhe was artful, had I doubted her: I am convinced I ſhall have your pardon for my aſperity towards you, when you learn how artfully I was wrought on; and the letters will ſhew you that ſhe employed the unprincipled meaſure of intercepting one of my anſwers to you, to interrupt a correſpondence your penetration made her dread. You will be ſolicitous to learn the ſtate of my feelings reſpecting theſe ſiſters, as contempt does not always deſtroy a violent paſſion — or eſteem, reſpect, and commiſeration, inſpire affection. Were I capable of inveſtigating my ſentiments, I would give you the reſult; but I am not: inceſſantly occupied, agitated, and aſſailed by the different paſſions theſe recent occurrences have produced, my mind is in a ſtate of anarchy, that precludes the analyſis of its feelings. I turn from Victoria with horror,

horror, and dare not dwell on the idea of Julia. All I can at preſent deſcribe is, that had I murdered the latter at the inſtigation of her ſiſter, my ſentiments in their reſpect would have been little leſs lively on the diſcovery of the innocence of my victim, and the guilt of the inſtigator, than they are now. Adieu for the preſent, my dear friend, I will try to get ſome reſt.

I have not obtained above two hours ſleep, but it has refreſhed and enabled me to reſume my pen; my ideas became ſo confuſed when I left off, that I hardly knew what I wrote. The Baron will not be here this hour; I will employ the interval in giving you my ſentiments on the conduct I think I ought to purſue, and hope they will meet your approbation: evermore ſhall I miſtruſt my own judgement, ſince my impetuoſity and indiſcretion have ſo nearly plunged me in ruin. Never will I again act from the impulſe of the moment, nor from any conſidera-

tion

tion be tempted to quit the path of ſincerity and perfect rectitude. Painful have been all the ſteps I have taken in the road of error, and fatal would have been the termination but for this providential diſcovery. The intention reflection has influenced me to adopt is, that of propoſing to the Baron and Madame de St. Clair, to offer myſelf to the lovely Julia. I know not that I can feel for her that paſſion her ſiſter's charms created in my heart, but I am convinced that the ſentiments ſhe has inſpired are ſuch as will influence me to make her happineſs my firſt object through life, and are, in fact, more calculated to promote my own than that violent paſſion which actuated me in my preference of her ſiſter. Had I leſs eſteem for the character of this amiable girl, the means I have too ſucceſsfully employed to win her affections, would be a ſufficient motive to me to offer to ſhare her deſtiny, and reſolve, by the moſt unremitted attentions to promote her happi-

neſs, to make ſome recompence for the injuries I have done her. It is, indeed, my moſt ardent wiſh now, that peace was reſtored to her afflicted heart—I fear it will never be in my power to recompenſe her for the miſery I have occaſioned; perhaps ſhe may now regard me with horror as the cauſe of her wretchedneſs, perhaps may refuſe to ſee me, yet I think her gentle heart cannot harbour reſentment. I own I am very impatient to learn her reception of the intelligence, and her opinion of me, whether ſhe will condemn or pity me.—Victoria, too!—Alas, dear Moubray! how is my heart torn to pieces at the repetition of that name—how tenderly was ſhe loved! never was her image abſent one moment from my imagination—it accompanied my fair hopes of future happineſs, mingled in every ſcene of expected felicity. I had adorned her with every virtue, as nature has with every charm—not more horror could be felt by the unfortunate

natives

natives of Peru, when they ſaw the temples of their deities profaned, and the images of the divinities themſelves torn down by the cruel Spaniards, than I feel from tearing the idea of this perfidious woman from my breaſt: her lovely form returns for ever to my mind, now that it can indulge reflection; and ſorrow, and tenderneſs, in ſpite of me overwhelm my ſoul—Oh, reaſon! attend to thy votary's prayer, ſhed thy influence over my mind, and empower me to conquer this weakneſs! I will again peruſe her letters—the indignation, the horror they excite will prove the beſt antidote to the effect of her charms. I have attempted the painful humiliating taſk—a few pages only could I get through—I truſt theſe will produce the deſired effect; never do we long regard thoſe who make us think ill of ourſelves, and who treat us with contempt—a lover may bear diſdain, but contempt will ſoon deſtroy his affection. Like thoſe to whom an enigma is given,

who pronounce it impoſſible to be diſcovered, yet when the ſolution is given, wonder they did not immediately perceive what was ſo obvious—now that this woman's conduct is unveiled to my view, I am aſtoniſhed that I did not ſooner diſcover its turpitude.—The Baron's carriage is in the court-yard.

I proceed to give you an account of the tranſactions that have taken place ſince yeſterday. Your knowledge of my heart will enable you to trace the feelings that were excited by the communication. The Baron went immediately to the reſidence of Mademoiſelle de Rancé, and improving on my ſuggeſtion, obtained permiſſion for her to remain at the convent with Julia till her liberation from it; proceeding thence to the Abbaye, he announced himſelf to the Superior, and requeſted to ſee his niece; he was informed ſhe ſhould attend him, but that ſhe was in ſo weak a ſtate from the grief ſhe had ſuffered, as to make

make it requiſite ſhe ſhould be prepared for ſuch an interview—it was therefore deemed beſt for Mademoiſelle de Rancé to be firſt introduced. "During her ab-
"ſence I made ſome inquiries," ſaid the Baron, "reſpecting Julia's character and
"conduct, the account I received delight-
"ed me; and as it muſt be very amia-
"ble to have overcome the prejudices en-
"tertained againſt her from the charges
"brought by her own mother, I could
"not conceal the ſatisfaction I felt, and
"it led me to avow what I had not de-
"ſigned to do—the evidence I had re-
"ceived of Julia's innocence, and my in-
"tention of making it as public as her ac-
"cuſation had been. The Superior ex-
"preſſed her pleaſure in this very fully;
"ſhe ſaid it was a rule with her never to
"interfere in family affairs, or to give an
"opinion where it was not required; but
"her obſervations, nevertheleſs, were
"awakened to form a judgement on the
"caſes that came under her view: in the

" preſent inſtance ſhe was peculiarly in-
" tereſted, and her attention had been un-
" commonly engaged—for ſhe was well
" acquainted with Julia from her hav-
" ing been almoſt entirely brought up
" in the convent—this acquaintance had
" excited her affection and eſteem for his
" niece; in fact, ſhe was beloved and
" eſteemed by every body: it therefore
" greatly ſurpriſed her when Julia was
" brought to her with the teſtimonials of
" her having carried on a ſecret corre-
" ſpondence with a lover—her ſuffer-
" ings, however, from the ſenſe of her er-
" ror, her reſignation, and ſweetneſs, had
" not only reſtored her to favour, but in-
" creaſed her regard; ſhe was happy,
" therefore, in the reconciliation that took
" place, but greatly was her aſtoniſhment
" excited when ſhe was again brought
" with charges of the moſt atrocious na-
" ture, and reſtrictions of the ſevereſt
" kind enjoined. Her knowledge of
" Madame de St. Clair's reſpectable cha-

" racter

" racter and tenderneſs for her children,
" made it impoſſible ſhe ſhould inflict
" unneceſſary ſeverity, and Julia's con-
" duct had made her deem it improbable
" ſhe ſhould merit it; however, appear-
" ances were ſo much againſt her, that
" ſhe treated her with the coldeſt reſerve,
" till her ſacred and ſolemn aſſurances of
" innocence, of even ignorance of the
" crime laid to her charge, with the ſe-
" vere effect it took on her delicate frame
" and gentle nature, ſoftened me," conti-
tinued the Superior, " in her behalf, and,
" with the contemplation of her conduct
" uniformly amiable and unfeignedly de-
" vout, convinced me ſhe was injured:
" every day has confirmed my opinion
" and increaſed my pity and regard for
" the ſweet ſufferer, inſomuch, that were
" ſhe my own child, I could not be more
" rejoiced in the manifeſtation of her in-
" nocence.—After ſome farther proof
" of Julia's amiable conduct," continued
the Baron, " I was informed of Julia's

" approach. Never, never during the " courſe of a life, in which my heart has " had many calls on its ſympathy, did I " feel an emotion ſo powerfully animated " by pity, admiration, and tenderneſs, as " was excited by the ſight of this dear " girl—her delicate form weakened " through illneſs; her pallid countenance, " in which reſignation ſeemed to attempt " the conqueſt of ſorrow; her trembling " limbs, agitation, and eager effort to ap- " proach me with an aſſumed cheerfulneſs " that would have concealed her an- " guiſh yet unſubdued—theſe circum- " ſtances affected me ſo much, that " I could not reſtrain my tears; they " fell on her lovely hand which ſhe " put through the grate to me, and though " ſhe did not ſpeak, its preſſure, and her " animated countenance, told me all her " ſoul felt on the occaſion." The Baron's tears were again excited by his recollection—my ſenſations were unutterable—" As ſoon," added he, " as I reco-

" vered

" vered my ſpeech, I told her I was now
" come only to ſee her, conſole her, and
" aſſure her of my friendſhip, but in a
" day or two I ſhould viſit her for a hap-
" pier purpoſe; I would bring her mo-
" ther to her embraces, would eſtabliſh
" her innocence, and reſtore her to liber-
" ty, and in all that depended on me, to
" happineſs. Gratitude, and a ſweet
" confuſion, prevented her utterance for
" ſome moments, but when ſhe recover-
" ed her voice, her acknowledgements
" were ſo animated, her expreſſions ſo
" tender, that they completed her influ-
" ence over me. My intereſt in her wel-
" fare became ſo powerful, that I reſol-
" ved to expedite every meaſure which
" tended to promote it; of this I aſſured
" her, and ſaying I would for the preſent
" avoid entering into explanations, got
" up to take my leave. Again would ſhe
" have poured forth the effuſions of her
" grateful heart, but I would not hear
" them—retiring haſtily from the apart-

" ment. After recommending Julia to the
" peculiar attention of the Superior, with
" whom I was much pleaſed, I went to
" my carriage, and returned to the Cha-
" teau.—Madame de St. Clair, I perceiv-
" ved, was rather ſurpriſed at my ab-
" ſence, and the guilty mind of Victoria
" made her examine me with many an
" anxious look. In the evening I ſought
" an opportunity of ſpeaking to Madame
" de St. Clair, and after the preparation
" requiſite to qualify my painful intelli-
" gence, laid open the whole buſineſs to
" this afflicted and excellent mother. I
" will not diſtreſs you ſtill farther, my
" dear Marquis, for I ſee how deeply you
" have been already affected by my nar-
" rative, with a particular deſcription of
" the aſtoniſhment, indignation, and an-
" guiſh Madame de St. Clair diſplayed
" at the diſcloſure I made. At firſt ſhe
" could ſcarcely believe it, but the proofs
" I gave, and her recollection of many
" circumſtances that now for the firſt time

" ſtruck

" ſtruck her, brought conviction and
" new ſorrow to her. I employed every
" effort to conſole her, and among other
" repreſentations not ineffectually made,
" ſaid, ſhe ought not to think her afflic-
" tion more grievous, ſince if one child
" was convicted another was cleared;
" and as ſhe was apprized already, that
" one was unworthy of her, ſhe ſhould
" not conſider her ſorrow aggravated;
" that as ſhe had *innocently* aggrieved the
" ſufferer, her conſcience ought to be
" pacified, and that the affectionate heart
" of her Julia was not eſtranged by it,
" but would think her future tenderneſs
" an ample compenſation. Thus by
" reaſoning with, and ſoothing her, I at
" length ſo far contributed to compoſe
" the mind of my ſiſter, that ſhe was ca-
" pable of attending to my plan reſpect-
" ing our farther proceedings. I ſub-
" mitted this ſcheme to her conſideration,
" to take Mademoiſelle de St. Clair to
" the convent where her ſiſter was, and in

" preſence of the Superior, Julia, Made-
" moiſelle de Rancé, and ourſelves, to
" produce our letters, and after ſome ob-
" ſervations on the nature of her con-
" duct, to quit her, and bring Julia
" home. My ſiſter-in-law perfectly ap-
" proved this plan, and it was reſolved
" that we ſhould put it in practice to-mor-
" row. I conclude that you, Marquis,
" would gladly excuſe being preſent at
" this ſcene, I therefore do not propoſe it
" to you, but will be obliged to you to
" lend me the letters, they ſhall be re-
" turned to you immediately." After thanking the Baron for his narrative, and expreſſing the ſentiments it naturally excited, I proceeded to inform him of my opinion and reſolutions reſpecting his niece Julia, whom, if I found ſtill prepoſſeſſed in favour of one who had cauſed her ſo much miſery, I would, with his permiſſion and Madame de St. Clair's, offer my hand to, and, by a life devoted to the purpoſe of making her happy, endeavour

to recompenſe her for the wretchedneſs ſhe had ſuffered. I would not anſwer that at firſt I could give her the place in my affection her ſiſter had poſſeſſed, ſince that was not at my diſpoſal, but my ſentiments towards her were ſuch as would enſure our happineſs. If this was approved, I would, when Mademoiſelle de St. Clair was gone, become a gueſt at the Caſtle again. The Baron expreſſed his approbation of what he was pleaſed to term my candour and generoſity in the moſt animated manner; he aſſured me an union between his niece and myſelf would be the moſt deſirable of all events to him, and he believed ſhe would have no great objection, when ſhe learnt that I, as well as herſelf, had been impoſed upon; for ſince I had been ſo unreſerved, he would be equally ſo, and acquaint me with the circumſtances that induced this opinion: he had told her ſhe owed his viſit to my anxiety for the relief of her feelings, and had deſcribed my uneaſi-

neſs

neſs on her account in ſtrong terms, on purpoſe to fathom her ſentiments—a deep bluſh and univerſal agitation had convinced him I had ſtill a very powerful intereſt in her heart, however he would conſult her and Madame de St. Clair, and let me know the reſult, I might depend on ſeeing or hearing from him on the enſuing day. I expreſſed my acknowledgements, and after ſome farther converſation, and my giving him the letters, he took his leave. Thus events ſtand at preſent, my dear Moubray; I have recovered ſome degree of compoſure, and my ideas are more collected, but there is ſtill much, very much agitation, uneaſineſs, and depreſſion on my mind, a conflict of the moſt painful nature rends my heart—long accuſtomed to dwell with delight on the idea of Victoria's charms and imaginary virtues, I cannot at once drive her from my memory; often do I, forgetting recent events, give way to the reflections that ſo lately conſtituted all my felicity,

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and yielding to the ſweet deluſion, feel only ſenſations the moſt ſatisfactory, till ſome ſudden recollection awakens me to acute wretchedneſs. My Paradiſe is loſt, my angel transformed to a fiend.—My parents wrongs—Julia's ſufferings—all ariſe to my tortured mind, and I try to hate the vile author of all this miſery; but ſome tenderneſs ſtill enters into my reſolves; however, be aſſured, whatever I may *ſuffer*, I will evermore *act* according to the dictates of rectitude.—I muſt conclude, my dear friend, for I feel a good deal indiſpoſed.

I am faithfully your's,

CHARLES DE BEAUMONT.

The Marquis DE BEAUMONT *to Sir* HENRY MOUBRAY.

Chateau de Villars-Coteret.

YOU will be very ſolicitous to hear from me, my dear friend; the more ſo, I am well aſſured, as I was obliged to conclude my laſt through the indiſpoſition which ſeized me; you will not wonder at this, ſo lately as I had recovered from a dangerous illneſs, my frame was naturally more ſuſceptible of derangement, and the agitation of my mind would have tried a firmer ſtate of health.—I have had a ſlight fever, but am now almoſt entirely reſtored, through the great kindneſs and attention of my friends here—You will perceive by the date of this that I am returned to my old quarters; the cauſe I will give in the courſe of my communications reſpecting what has happened ſince I laſt wrote,

wrote, I know you will wiſh every particular. The Baron himſelf came early the next day to call me, I was not up, owing to my illneſs; he expreſſed much concern, and was really ſo uneaſy, that, though he came to give me ſome intereſting intelligence, he forgot it in his ſolicitude for me, till I inquired the effect of his conſultation with Madame de St. Clair: recollecting himſelf, he ſaid, the cauſe of his early viſit was, to inform me of an event that had thrown the family into great confuſion, and fruſtrated part of their plan.—Victoria was gone off; ſhe had, probably, diſcovered by ſome means, that her conduct was betrayed, and ſuſpected the conſequence, which, to prevent, had influenced this ſtep; it was found, ſhe had made her eſcape in the night, had taken every thing valuable with her, but had left no traces of her flight, or any letter to account for it—it was ſuppoſed ſhe had got into one of the public carriages that

paſs

paſs near the place, and proceeded to Paris; they hoped, however, through the diligent ſearch they had made, to diſcover her route, and place her in ſome ſecure retreat.—Madame de St. Clair was extremely wretched; ſhe had reſolved, in order to give her ſome conſolation, to go inſtantly and fetch Julia and Louiſa de Rancé, but had called to inform me firſt, and to acquaint me, that Madame de St. Clair (whom he had communicated my propoſal to on the preceding evening) was as much charmed as himſelf with it: if it met her daughter's concurrence, ſhe ſhould think herſelf as happy as a parent in her circumſtances could be; but, at any rate, ſhe begged I would, at leaſt, come and paſs a few days with them before my return to Paris. They had propoſed the Baron's fetching me in the evening, but this new occurrence had altered their plans. He came now to inform me only of the event, and ſhould proceed inſtantly

ſtantly to fetch his niece, as ſoon as they were returned to the Caſtle: if I thought I was able to riſe, he intreated that I would accept the carriage to convey me to Madame de St. Clair's, where every attention, I ſo much required and merited, ſhould be paid me. He could not bear the idea of my being ill among ſtrangers, wanting thoſe ſervices ſo eſſential, when under the influence of indiſpoſition. I gave him the acknowledgements due to his great kindneſs, and told him I would endeavour to riſe and accept his friendly offer, for I really felt the want of that kind ſolicitude ſo requiſite in a ſtate like mine—that I would not now detain him, by the expreſſion of my ſentiments on what he had communicated, ſince his buſineſs was of ſuch conſequence in bringing comfort to the diſtreſſed; but in the evening we would talk it over, if I was able to come to the Caſtle. He ſaid, if I was not, I might depend on his coming to me again: in

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the mean time he begged me to reflect where I thought it moſt probable Victoria would go, and acquaint him when we met; then, reiterating his expreſſions of concern, took leave. While he continued to ſpeak, my attention was called off from contemplating his communication fully, but when he was gone, my mind gave itſelf up to the various ideas and feelings it was calculated to excite—ſurprize and concern formed the principal ſhare of theſe: that ſhe could deviſe and execute ſuch a plan in ſo ſhort a ſpace of time, was matter of aſtoniſhment to me; and the reflection of the dangers to which ſhe muſt be expoſed, I own, in ſpite of my contempt for her, excited my uneaſineſs: where ſhe could go—how ſubſiſt—engaged my ſolicitude. After many painful reflections, and a variety of wild conjectures, it at length occurred, that ſhe was gone to the houſe of Madame D'Aubigné. The more I revolved this in my mind, the more convinced

vinced I was of being right. Anxious to aſcertain the point, I reſolved to diſpatch Dubois off inſtantly to Paris: I knew he would manage the point well; and as I reſolved on going to the Chateau, however indiſpoſed, I could better diſpenſe with his attendance: I was alſo anxious to reſtore peace to the mind of Madame de St. Clair, as far as poſſible, and to prevent that artful young woman from enſnaring D'Aubigné, as he is, it ſeems, a worthy young man; and I wiſh to give ſome information reſpecting myſelf to my father and mother. Ordering Dubois, therefore, to prepare for the journey, I immediately wrote a few lines to the Duke; they were calculated to ſatisfy him till I could give a fuller account; and they conveyed a hint of my coming to ſee them in a few days—for this I think probable; and if it ſhould not happen, I ſhall give ſufficient reaſons. When Dubois was ready, I furniſhed him with his inſtructions, and in caſe of his diſcovering

vering Mademoiſelle de St. Clair, to ſend an expreſs, but to ſtay himſelf on the ſpot, that ſhe might not again eſcape. I would then have diſpatched him, but he begged ſo earneſtly to wait, till I had tried whether I could riſe, as there was nobody whoſe attendance I was accuſtomed to in illneſs but his, that I could not refuſe. I was ſtill ſo weak and ill, that it was with much difficulty I could get up; however, ſome broth he had prepared refreſhed me much, and he ſet out when he found me better. He is a faithful and grateful creature, and confirms my opinion, that kindneſs is ſeldom thrown away on our dependents. It is no wonder, when they are ſo frequently ill-uſed, and contemptuouſly treated, (as if of a lower ſpecies) that the degradation ſhould produce the effect of making them act unworthily; but in my opportunities of judging, I have obſerved that nine out of ten, whoſe natures had not been corrupted by diſgraceful or harſh

treatment, were ſo ſuſceptible of gratitude, that they would go to the end of the world for a kind expreſſion, or good treatment. But to return to my narrative—The carriage came for me at the time appointed, and I proceeded to the Chateau: my mind was much agitated on the road, from the idea of ſeeing Julia. I felt myſelf ſo unequal to it, that I reſolved to plead my illneſs as an excuſe for not joining the company. The Baron's kind attentions had prevented me on this occaſion; for he met me in the court-yard, and ſuggeſted that, from an apprehenſion of company being too much for me in my weak ſtate, he had met me, to conduct me to Madame de St. Clair's dreſſing-room; and if I found myſelf able to ſit up, ſhe and himſelf would give themſelves the pleaſure to attend me. Much pleaſed with this delicate attention, I thanked him as my ſenſe of it dictated, and ſaid I would try to avail myſelf of his obliging propoſal,

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by continuing to ſit up a few hours. When we were ſeated in the dreſſing-room, I acquainted him with the ſteps I had taken; he was much pleaſed, and thought my conjectures well founded—this idea had not ſtruck him—indeed, he knew not what to think. He then proceeded to inform me, that he had brought Julia home, and had witneſſed one of the moſt affecting ſcenes he had ever beheld, between her and her mother: the ſufferings each had undergone, the various affecting recollections that occurred, and the ſatisfaction of their re-union, occaſioned ſuch overpowering ſenſations, as made it difficult to keep life in them. Madame de St. Clair's ſelf-reproaches, and Julia's tenderneſs in ſoothing her, had drawn tears from every eye; but though the ſcene had produced ſo much agitation, he hoped it would have the effect of reſtoring ſome peace to Madame de St. Clair, whom he pitied as much as he eſteemed, for her

ſuffer-

ſufferings on account of children, to whom ſhe had been ſuch an exemplary mother. He thought the preſent objects would draw off her attention from thoſe ſubjects calculated to grieve her. I acquieſced in his wiſhes, but ſaid, that as this excellent parent had ſuffered ſo much in the recent ſcenes, I thought it would be right not to expoſe her to any farther trial now. The ſight of me would naturally agitate her much; therefore, I judged it beſt for her to defer ſeeing me till ſhe was more equal to it. The Baron approved this, and ſaid he would acquaint Madame de St. Clair with my kind conſideration for her. I then inquired about the ſtate of Julia's health. He ſaid, ſhe was already much better; but ſorrow was become ſo habitual to her, that he thought ſhe would not ſoon ſhake off that melancholy which tinged her every feature, and accompanied her whole conduct. Obſerving the effect of this on me, whom it naturally affected moſt

deeply, he changed the converſation, and aſked me my opinion of his nephew. I told him, that I thought, from every judgement I had been able to form, he would prove an honour to him, for he poſſeſſed a good underſtanding, an excellent heart, and ſweet diſpoſition: he was lively—perhaps impetuous; but I had too much intereſt in defending that error, not to attempt the vindication of it: I hoped it was not incompatible with good principles, or rectitude; and as time would ſubdue it, was intitled to indulgence. The Baron ſaid ſome very flattering things to me on this occaſion, and expreſſed his ſatisfaction very ſtrongly at my teſtimony in his nephew's favour: he ſaid, he was rather diſpleaſed with his want of attention to himſelf, and the tenor of his conduct: he found he had been very extravagant lately; and though he was ſo recently arrived, his nephew was gone on a party of pleaſure with that vile creature, Madame Nivelon; but he

ſhould talk to him ſeriouſly when they met, and he hoped to bring him to a ſenſe of his duty. I engaged for the rectitude of his conduct, when the miſt of paſſion was diſſipated, and related many circumſtances in proof of the goodneſs of his heart; the Baron was greatly delighted with them. After ſome farther converſation, finding my fever return, I begged the Baron's excuſe, and retired to my apartment. Madame de St. Clair had, as kindly as judiciouſly, prepared me a different chamber; I felt the benefit, for I obtained a good night's reſt, which I ſhould not have done, had I again entered the apartment where the heart-rending diſcovery was made. I felt myſelf ſo much refreſhed by my repoſe, and ſome preſcriptions of Madame's, as to be enabled to receive her with compoſure, and offer the conſolation calculated to ſoothe her: in fact, ſhe quitted me much more compoſed than when ſhe came. I have not yet ſeen Julia—I believe the

meeting is mutually dreaded — I ſhall avoid it, till I learn whether ſhe accepts or rejects me. In the latter caſe, I ſhall write her a letter of apology for my conduct; particularly for that inſolent epiſtle I was influenced to ſend her, and take my final leave of the Chateau. I judged it beſt not to take this ſtep till I learned her determination; for never more will I employ any meaſure, till I have acquainted all the parties concerned in it with my intentions. Too much bitterneſs of heart have I felt, from engaging in what I deemed an innocent deception, ever to be guilty of any thing that requires concealment—ſhame as well as ſorrow has attended the diſcovery, as is ever the caſe. The Baron has not yet apprized me of her ſentiments; he chuſes to defer it, I ſuppoſe, till I am more recovered: indeed he now ſedulouſly avoids all intereſting topics, and, with the kindeſt attention, leads to accounts of his paſt life, the countries he has viſited, and ſcenes

he

he has been engaged in; and, with a candour that excites my higheſt admiration, acknowledges his paſt errors, and deplores his treatment of his family—his conduct now, I am ſure, not merely entitles him to forgiveneſs but eſteem; mine, attended with the trueſt regard, he has enſured.

An expreſs is juſt arrived from Dubois. I had gueſſed aright—Mademoiſelle de St. Clair is at the houſe of Madame D'Aubigné. Dubois inquired firſt of all the diligence drivers, and, by conſiderable fees, at length obtained an acknowledgement from one of them, of his having brought a young lady of the given deſcription to Paris on ſuch a morning—ſhe had taken a fiacre; but he knew the driver, and could eaſily find him. They proceeded in ſearch of him, and then diſcovered, that, to avoid purſuit, ſhe had changed coaches ſeveral times; how-

ever, as theſe people are known to each other, ſhe was at length traced to the houſe of Madame D'Aubigné, where, it ſeems, ſhe has taken another name. Dubois ſaid, he had diſguiſed himſelf in ſuch a manner, that ſhe could not know him if ſhe ſaw him, and he would watch her ſo effectually, as to prevent the poſſibility of her eſcape; and, adding, that he had forwarded my letter to the Duke, deſired my farther orders. On a conſultation with the Baron and Madame, it was agreed, that the Baron ſhould immediately proceed to Paris, and procure an order for the confinement of Mademoiſelle de St. Clair; and that ſhe ſhould communicate every paſt occurrence to the Duke and Ducheſs. I gave him a letter of introduction to my father, and recommended his going there firſt, as they could expedite the obtaining an order. In conſequence of this arrangement, I ſat down to write a letter to the Duke; but recollecting ſomething I

wiſhed

wiſhed to ſay to the Baron, I went to his apartment—he was not there; ſuppoſing, however, it would not be long ere he came, I reſolved to wait. As I was looking over a book that lay on the table, I heard the ſound of a female ſtep. I became extremely agitated—I thought it might be Julia—it was; ſhe alſo had come in ſearch of her uncle: ſhe ſaw me not till ſhe had advanced almoſt to the ſpot where I ſtood. I had no power to ſpeak. She raiſed her eyes, and ſeeing me, uttered a faint ſhriek, and would have ſunk to the ground, but that I ſupported her, which my trembling limbs ſcarce left me the power of doing. Diſtreſſed beyond meaſure, I had not recollection to ring the bell; all that occurred was to apply ſome ſalts; I dared not quit her to reach ſome water—at length ſhe gave ſome ſymptoms of returning life. I then carried her to a great chair, and kneeling at her feet, renewed the application of the ſalts. Now did that voice,

which had before ſpoken to my ſoul—which had ſaid, "behold your victim," recur to my memory. I now ſaw, indeed, my victim—If, when under the influence of an impreſſion calculated to prevent my being affected by her intereſting appearance, I could yet be ſo ſenſible to it as to feel the ſenſations I formerly deſcribed to you, judge what I now experienced on beholding this lovely young creature, more beautiful, more intereſting than ever, drooping under the ſorrow I had in ſo great a degree occaſioned—ſo ſtrong were my ſenſations, my remorſe, my pity, and anguiſh, that, weakened as I was too by indiſpoſition, my feelings operated even to the drawing floods of tears from my eyes. When Julia became ſenſible to ſurrounding objects, ſhe found me in this ſituation. Her lovely hand, which was locked in mine, was bathed with my tears. When ſhe perceived me, a trembling ſeized her whole frame, and a deep bluſh overſpread

her

her beauteous countenance. She attempted to ſpeak, but her voice failed! ſhe could only wave her hand for me to go. Never, I ſaid, could I quit her, till I had expreſſed my deep ſenſe of the wrong I had done her, till by an aſſurance, the moſt ſincere, of my remorſe, and heart-felt grief, I had, in ſome degree, atoned for my error, till I had ſome reaſon to hope for her forgiveneſs, I felt myſelf ſo unworthy her favour, that I would not preſume now to ſolicit any thing but her pardon: if, hereafter, ſhe ſhould judge from my conduct I merited her farther favour, my whole life ſhould be employed in the endeavour to promote her happineſs, and atone for the injury I had done her. The ardour with which I ſpoke this, muſt convince her it was the genuine ſentiment of my heart; and believe me it was; I would have given my exiſtence to reſtore tranquillity to her boſom. I looked at her for ſome time in ſpeechleſs anxiety for a reply. I

felt as if my doom for happineſs or miſery hung on her lips. Her confuſion and agitation prevented her utterance; the variations in her expreſſive countenance ſtrongly depicted the emotions of her heart. At length, in trembling, but ſweet accents, ſhe aſſured me, ſo far from thinking me at all to blame, ſhe conſidered me as more entitled to pity than even herſelf: I had been impoſed on by arts an ingenuous mind could not poſſibly ſuſpect; my conduct had been the natural conſequence of that impoſition; my ſufferings were ſuch as to entitle me to pity, even though I had been cenſurable; and my preſent compunction and wretchedneſs, for being the cauſe, though innocently, of ſorrow to a fellow creature, claimed not only pity but ſympathy. She aſſured me ſhe retained no reſentment, on the contrary, ſhould ever wiſh my welfare—farther ſhe could not go, for an inſuperable bar was placed between us. She was truly ſenſible to the amiable

motive which influenced me, but could not allow it to produce the effect I propoſed. The bluſh and tremor which accompanied theſe words, led me to hope they were not the dictates of her heart, and I was going to remonſtrate and to inquire the nature of the obſtacle ſhe alluded to, when I heard the Baron's ſtep. Julia heard it too, and requeſted me to go out and meet her uncle to explain the cauſe of our being there. I immediately aroſe, and preſſing her lovely hand to my lips, bid her adieu. I had now recollection ſufficient to ring the bell as I paſſed, in caſe ſhe ſhould require farther aſſiſtance, and then quitting the apartment, went to meet the Baron, whom I conducted to mine: I there recounted to him the tranſaction that had juſt taken place, expreſſing my admiration of the ſweetneſs and generoſity of his niece's diſpoſition in the terms they deſerved; I aſſured him that the contemplation of her amiable qualities and her virtues, produced in me the

ſtrongeſt deſire to engage the intereſt I had once made in her gentle heart, I hoped I ſhould have his concurrence in the attainment of this point, and ſhould ſhe not be averſe to my addreſſes, I might be permitted to renew them. The Baron appeared much pleaſed with my communication, and aſſured me I had his warmeſt wiſhes for my ſucceſs, but he could not influence Julia in ſo delicate a point; all he could do was to inquire the nature of her objection, and if not ſo inſuperable as ſhe deemed it, to give me opportunities of vanquiſhing her ſcruples and reviving her affection. This, I aſſured him, was all I required, and I ſincerely thanked him for his kindneſs; as he was ſolicitous to haſten his journey I would not detain him, but informing him that I ſhould now join the party in the drawing-room, as my interview with Julia had taken place, I proceeded to finiſh my letter, and the Baron to make his arrangements for the journey. I had

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ſoon concluded my epiſtle, which I hurried, that I might be at liberty to indulge my reflection on the paſt ſcene. Julia's lovely form then preſented itſelf to my view, adorned with all that could charm or intereſt the heart; her gentleneſs, tenderneſs, and ſenſibility excited my ſtrongeſt admiration; I dwelt with delight on the lovelineſs of her form and face; her ſufferings and virtues inſpired a tenderneſs blended with reſpect; in fine, I conſidered her as the firſt of human beings. The idea of an inſuperable bar alarmed and pained me. Was it that we are ſo contradictory we become ſolicitous for what we think not attainable, or that my heart was in a ſtate that rendered it ſuceptible to tender impreſſions? I cannot decide; but I felt that Julia had acquired an intereſt beyond what I thought poſſible. What an antidote does her preſence bring to the poiſon her ſiſter had infuſed! I never behold her without recurring to the treachery and vile arts Vic-

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toria employed to delude me, and the contemptuous epithets ſhe beſtowed for my having been miſled—my blood runs cold through every vein when I think of the fate that awaited me from the ſucceſs of her project. The Baron ſurpriſed me in my reverie, and awakened me from it by demanding his credentials. I delivered them, and told him I thought it would be better I accompanied him to the drawing-room, as the little buſtle incident to his departure would take off a conſiderable part of the confuſion which muſt naturally take place on my meeting the party. He approved, and conducting me there, ſaid in a cheerful voice: "I "am come to engage your intereſts, la- "dies, for my invalid: he is going to "loſe his firſt phyſician, and will there- "fore require the attention of ſome "friendly ſubſtitute: I recommend him "to the care of you all, and expect to "hear a good account of him when I re- "turn." Madame de St. Clair ſaid, I

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was entitled on my own account to all poſ-
ble attention, and therefore he might
rely on it, that every care he could
poſſibly deſire ſhould be taken of me. I
bowed my acknowledgements, and then
went to pay my reſpects to Mademoiſelle
de Rancé, that the lovely Julia might
have time to recover the confuſion, which
was conſpicuous in her countenance.
The Baron ſoon took his leave, and I em-
ployed myſelf in endeavouring to prevent
Madame de St. Clair from dwelling on
the idea of the purport of his journey. I
inquired about my acquaintance in the
neighbourhood, related ſome anecdotes
that had occurred in camp, and in fine ſo
engaged her attention, that ſhe became
leſs ſenſible to her concern; in the even-
ing I propoſed cards, for though in general
they are, I think, the bane of ſocial inter-
courſe, yet in ſome circumſtances, they
become very uſeful—in our ſituation they
were particularly ſo, they removed the
embarraſſment incident to our feelings,
and

and imperceptibly produced that eaſy intercourſe which would have been impracticable had we recurred to our delicate circumſtances or paſt occurrences. As the lovely Julia and myſelf were invalids, we retired early, but finding no diſpoſition to ſleep, I ſat down to relate the events that have taken place ſince I laſt wrote. My mind is more compoſed than it has been ſince the diſcovery which had almoſt ſubverted my reaſon. I ſhall diſpatch this in the morning, but you may rely on hearing every new occurrence—I have a double intereſt in this; the firſt, as it will oblige you, I know, from the friendly intereſt you take in my welfare, and next as it gives me the greateſt relief imaginable; my heart becomes tranquil, and my feelings acquire compoſure from imparting the events that agitate me. Adieu, dear Moubray; in proportion as I have returned to the practice of rectitude, I am become more ſenſible to the bleſſing of your friendſhip; while

while my conſcience reproached me, which ſpite of me it often did moſt grievouſly, your idea was accompanied by ſenſations that made me ſhun your remembrance; ſince I have ſhook off the yoke of error, I am more attached to you; hence I find, that to love you and virtue are conſequent to each other; can there be a greater eulogium? and feeling it juſt, I am proud and happy in ſubſcribing myſelf,

Dear Moubray,

Your ſincere friend,

CHARLES DE BEAUMONT.

Sir HENRY MOUBRAY *to the Marquis* DE BEAUMONT.

Cavendiſh-ſquare.

I SHOULD hold myſelf unworthy a friendſhip ſo delicately, yet ſtrongly marked as yours, my dear Marquis, did I not make an effort to expreſs my ſenſe of it,

it, and ſpeak to ſubjects ſo intereſting as thoſe your letters convey. My mind is in a ſtate very unfit for writing—my diſtreſs is indeſcribable; but I will not advert to my own ſituation, your's opens a wide and uſeful field for obſervation; my attention to it has diverted my thoughts from dwelling, as they would have otherwiſe painfully done, on my own affairs. I was neceſſarily much ſurpriſed at your communication, but ſome reflections your former letters induced, tended to render that ſentiment not ſo ſtrong as it would have been, had not doubt and ſuſpicion prepared me in ſome degree. I ſhall refer to your late miſtreſs as little as poſſible in the obſervations induced by your letters; I conclude ſhe is now receiving the puniſhment due to her crimes, and I think with Marmontel, that when Providence corrects, we ſhould ſpare; that the lovely Julia's innocence is cleared, is a circumſtance of great ſatisfaction to me. I always felt an intereſt in her from your

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deſcriptions, which, though ſhe was repreſented as ſo artful, I could not entirely conquer; and this peculiar cauſe for my rejoicing is ſtrengthened by my reflection of the circumſtance in a general point of view, as clearing an amiable character, and reſtoring peace to a ſuffering mind. The hand of Providence has indeed been manifeſt through this event. Its operations by ſecondary cauſes to produce this iſſue, claims our attention, our gratitude, and perfect ſubmiſſion in future to the Almighty will. Had the obſtacles your father's opinions placed in your way been overcome, had he yielded what his honour was intereſted in, to your requiſition, you had been the moſt wretched of men—had you poſſeſſed the independence you ſo ardently wiſhed, you had become the unhappy victim of treachery; could the title of nobleſſe have been procured, or the Baron's return expedited, your miſery and ruin had been ſure; in fine, had not every circumſtance taken

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place in the manner it has done, and "worked together" to produce the preſent effect, what you conſidered as the moſt deſirable event of your life, what you contemplated with rapture as the ſource of all your felicity, would have plunged you in everlaſting wretchedneſs. Let us adore, and humbly acquieſce in thoſe diſpenſations, which, however, they they may oppoſe our wiſhes, ultimately promote our beſt intereſts. I greatly admire your friend the Baron, and approve every ſtep you have taken ſubſequent to the diſcovery; your intentions reſpecting the ſweet Julia claim my ſtrongeſt approbation, and the execution of them will, I am convinced, produce as much happineſs to your heart as honour to your character. Such a woman muſt inſpire the tendereſt affection, when ſhe becomes the object of continual obſervation, and her merits and virtues will render her influence as permanent as it is ardent. From your late communications I am perſuaded

ſuaded ſhe will poſſeſs a very ſtrong intereſt in your feelings—She has opened the avenues that lead immediately to the heart—admiration, pity, tenderneſs, and eſteem; cheriſh the ſweet influence, it will conduct you to happineſs, and enſure your perſeverance in virtue. My ſympathy is ſtrongly excited for Madame de St. Clair—how many wounds has her maternal boſom felt, inflicted too by thoſe ſhe had ſhielded from every evil, by thoſe ſhe moſt loved, whoſe intereſts and happineſs ſhe had ſo uniformly ſtudied. Should you prevail on her lovely daughter to unite her deſtiny with your's, I am convinced her happineſs will be your conſtant ſtudy. I am much concerned that your young friend Louis is attached to ſo unprincipled a woman as Madame de Nivelon; the power of theſe creatures is ſo great, that I have known them ſubvert principles that appeared the moſt firm, and corrupt hearts the beſt diſpoſed. I wiſh he was with his regiment; he may

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be reclaimable now, but a ſhort time longer would, in all probability, ruin him irretrievably. Mademoiſelle de Rancé is a charming girl; I honour her for her attachment to her friend, and the proof ſhe gave of it, as well as for her good ſenſe in meeting the Baron, and ſuggeſting thoſe ideas which impreſſed him ſo ſtrongly in behalf of Julia, and incited him to judge her by the faireſt criterion, the general tenor of her conduct. I thank you moſt ſincerely, my dear Marquis, for the kindneſs of communicating every intereſting event ſo minutely, you could not have obliged me more—I am very anxious to obtain farther particulars. My heart entered ſo entirely into all your feelings and ſituation, that ſcarcely could I have been more ſenſible to the various emotions they tended to excite, had the circumſtances been my own—aſtoniſhment, grief, horror, pity, and tenderneſs, by turns aſſailed me; their influence was ſo obvious, that they engaged the attention of Lady Moubray and Miſs Melcombe in an uncommon

common degree; they are too much accuſtomed to ſee me melancholy for that to excite much obſervation now. On their inquiring the occaſion of my agitation, I acquainted them that ſome intereſting intelligence from you had cauſed it. Lady Moubray was ſolicitous to know its nature, but I did not conſider myſelf at liberty to inform her without your permiſſion. I ſhall, however, be freed from the teaſing interrogatories put to me perpetually on the ſource of my diſquietude, by your letters, as they will be now ſuppoſed to occaſion it—Alas, my friend! I find my ſituation almoſt unſupportable, but I hope to be with you ere long. Continue to write to me; it is the greateſt conſolation I am ſuſceptible of to hear from you. I find I have ſo little power over my agitated feelings, that I muſt conclude. Accept, dear Marquis, the ſincereſt good wiſhes of

Your faithful friend,

HENRY MOUBRAY.

The Marquis DE BEAUMONT *to Sir* HENRY MOUBRAY.

Chateau de Villars-Coteret.

I AM moſt truly grieved, my dear friend, to obſerve the ſorrowful expreſſion of your letter; if my ſympathy can afford you conſolation, you will be comforted, for believe me I moſt truly enter into your feelings, and lament their poignancy. You ſay my communications produce the deſireable effect of drawing off your attention from your own melancholy ſituation; I will therefore proceed to relate the circumſtances which have taken place ſince I laſt wrote. The following day I had an opportunity of ſpeaking to Madame de St. Clair reſpecting Julia; I repeated what I had propoſed to the Baron: ſhe expreſſed the ſtrongeſt approbation of it, and her ardent deſire that our union might take place, but ſaid her daughter had ſuffered ſo much, and proved herſelf ſo ca-

pable of judging and acting right, that ſhe ſhould leave her to decide for herſelf. I was too well convinced of the propriety of this to oppoſe it, I only requeſted an opportunity of ſpeaking to Julia on the ſubject, if I found ſhe was abſolute in her determination to reject me, I would take my leave; for ſo ſtrong was my ſenſe of her merits, and admiration of her charms, that I was convinced if I remained much longer at the Caſtle, my peace of mind would be irretrievably gone, as an affection founded on real excellence was ſeldom conquered. Madame de St. Clair acquieſced in my reaſonings, and engaged to ſpeak to her daughter on the ſubject of granting me an interview. After ſome farther converſation on this point, I mentioned her ſon to her, and taking the hint from your letter, propoſed to her ſending him an order to join his regiment. She thanked me, even with tears, for thus intereſting myſelf in reſpect to her family and misfortunes, and after

marking her approbation of the plan, added, that ſhe ſhould (if it happened) conſider the day that united me to her daughter, as one of the happieſt of her life; indeed it was the circumſtance in the world that was neareſt her heart. While ſhe was ſpeaking, the ſervant brought me a letter; I ſaw it was in Louis's hand, and the poſt-mark his quarters. I begged Madame's permiſſion to read it; theſe were the contents:

"Conſcious of my unworthineſs to approach you till I had, by my conduct, proved the ſincerity of my repentance, and atoned in ſome degree for my miſconduct, I ſhould not, my honoured Colonel, have dared to addreſs you, but to make a confeſſion of my errors, and to demand pardon of you and my family for the ill return I have made to your kindneſs, and the uneaſineſs I have given them, particularly my deareſt mother, who, with ſorrow and remorſe I acknowledge it, has deſerved better treatment.

ment. I will hope, however, that the conduct I am reſolved to adopt will induce her to forget my folly and ingratitude; never ſhall ſhe more breathe a ſigh on my account (that it depends on me to ſpare her). I deteſt myſelf when I reflect how ſolicitous ſhe has ever been to promote my intereſts, and how wretched I have made her in return. Could ſhe witneſs the tears that theſe ideas force from me, I am ſure ſhe would forgive her repentant and unhappy ſon. Faſcinated by the charms, the allurements and endearments of a demon in an angel's form, I loſt every ſenſe of the claims of my family, my honour, and ſociety; nor could ought but the ſhock her abandoned propoſal gave, have broke the charm. Her extravagance and acceptance of the moſt laviſh ſupplies (I confeſs with ſhame I raiſed money on my expectancies at immenſe loſs to beſtow on her) did not awaken my ſuſpicion. I thought the former a pardonable offence, and ſhe, by very

artful means, reconciled me to the latter. I even thought ſhe obliged me; but when on our late excurſion ſhe made a propoſition which marked her character too ſtrongly for even love to find an excuſe for it, my horror conquered an affection that had its riſe only in paſſion. She, with the ſubtlety of a fiend, wrought on my affection, till I thought there was nothing I would not have done to pleaſe ſuch a woman. She then introduced the ſubject of your ſurpriſing us, and repreſented that you had moſt groſſly inſulted her. I felt my boſom fire with rage—ſhe marked its effects on my countenance, and judging that ſhe could now obtain her purpoſe, urged me to redreſs her wrongs by ſending you a challenge. Such a propoſal from a woman who pretended to love me, ſtruck me ſo much, that I was deprived of ſpeech. She miſtook the ſource, and continued to excite my reſentment. I ſaid at length, her intelligence ſo much ſhocked me that I muſt

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retire to recollect myſelf. I went inſtantly to my apartment to give free ſcope to my ideas and feelings. I now ſaw this woman in her true light—intereſted, unprincipled, malicious, and revengeful. I reflected on the artifice ſhe had employed to ſtimulate me to this horrid act—to deſtroy my benefactor, my colonel, my friend, or to fall myſelf—her whole conduct and herſelf appeared now ſo hateful, that I reſolved to bid her an eternal adieu, and to inflict the puniſhment I had merited on myſelf, to become a voluntary exile from my family and friends, till I had retrieved my paſt conduct. Purſuant to this reſolution I pleaded illneſs as a cauſe of my not joining the company again, and ſat down to write a conciſe adieu to my late miſtreſs. Riſing at the dawn of day, I mounted a poſt-horſe, and never ſtopped till I had gained my quarters. Were I to deſcribe the extent of my ſufferings from the ſenſe of my irregularities, I am perſuaded I ſhould excite

the pity of thoſe whom my conduct has ſo juſtly offended; but as I feel I have deſerved them, as I wiſh to bear the conſequences of my folly, I will not owe to their goodneſs alone the pardon I hope to obtain; I will remain with my regiment till I have, by the ſtricteſt œconomy, retrieved my affairs, and will employ my time in cultivating my mind, and improving myſelf in my profeſſional and moral duties; when theſe points are in ſome degree accompliſhed, and you, my reſpected Colonel, can teſtify my penitence is ſincere, I truſt you will add to the many obligations I have received at your hands, that of being a guarantee for my future conduct. With the moſt fervent good wiſhes for your happineſs, believe me,

"My honoured Colonel,

"Your obedient humble ſervant,

"LOUIS DE ST. CLAIR."

"P. S. I preſume not to deſire to be remembered by my family till I am more worthy

worthy of it, but they are tenderly cherished in my remembrance."

I read the above with emotions so conspicuous, that they excited the attention of Madame de St. Clair. She hoped no new cause of uneasiness had arisen to disturb me. I thanked her for the interest she took in my feelings, and assured her, satisfaction had the greatest share in my sensations. I was the more sensible to it now, as it empowered me to relieve her mind from much anxiety, and to restore some of that tranquillity she so greatly required. She looked surprized, and I gave her the letter. Floods of tears bathed her face as she perused it; when she had done, she raised her hands and eyes to heaven, uttering a fervent thanksgiving for this blessing; then turning to me, "Can I ever be too thankful, Mar-
"quis," said she, "for this mercy, this
"balm applied to my wounded spirits,
"at the moment that I was almost over-

" whelmed with the anguiſh my childsen
" had occaſioned! Dear, amiable boy!
" more endeared than ever by thy inge-
" nuous confeſſion, thy ſelf-inflicted pu-
" niſhment—I will immediately write, to
" aſſure thee thou art not merely par-
" doned—thou art more dear than ever
" to the heart of thy mother!" I ap-plauded Madame de St. Clair's deſign, ſaying, I thought ſuch a heart as her ſon's required no probation to determine its ſincerity; I would anticipate the performance of his requeſt, by engaging myſelf for his future conduct. I was ſatisfied he would contribute equally to the honour as the happineſs of his family in future. This good mother liſtened to me with delight, and agreed that ſhe might now, ſhe hoped, depend on his conduct. She then requeſted the letter, to ſhew to Julia, who would derive ſo much ſatisfaction from its peruſal. I ſuggeſted, that it would give me a favourable opportunity of ſpeaking to her

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daughter, if I was permitted to preſent it. Madame de St. Clair approved this, and ſaid, ſhe would immediately go and requeſt Louiſa's attendance, that we might converſe uninterruptedly. I thought, my dear Moubray, that our converſing firſt on her brother's ſubject would by a ſort of preparation, render this gentle creature leſs ſenſible to the embarraſſment incident to our intereſting converſation. As ſoon after Madame de St. Clair was gone as I judged Julia would be alone, I took the letter; ſhe changed colour, and trembled violently as I approached. Affecting not to notice her emotion, I told her I had brought a letter for her peruſal, which would give her great ſatisfaction; and I had too much intereſt in promoting that, to allow of any other perſon's being the meſſenger. She thanked me by a ſweet ſmile, but did not ſpeak. I gave her the letter, and taking the ſeat cloſe to her, which Louiſa had occupied, watched her lovely and ex-

preſſive countenance as ſhe read it;—I have frequently marked the effect of her appearance, when ſenſibility animates her, and pronounced it irreſiſtible, I could not, even when armed againſt its power, prevent its influence on my heart; and now it was ſtrengthened by every ſentiment which could aid its impreſſion; I was ſo awakened to it, that my admiration could only be equalled by my aſtoniſhment, how I was ever induced to ſuſpect the reality of thoſe feelings, which were ſo ſtrongly marked. So ingroſſed was her attention by the letter ſhe held, that ſhe ſeemed unconſcions of my preſence. A ſmile of ſatisfaction beamed on her countenance at the ſame time that the tears ſtole imperceptibly down her cheeks. She continued to look at the letter long after ſhe had read it---loſt in reflection on its contents. I was too much delighted to find pleaſure once more reſtored to her, and to contemplate the charms of her beautiful countenance,

to interrupt her meditations. I continued ſilent, therefore, till ſhe of herſelf recollected my being preſent. Apologizing for her abſence, ſhe ſaid the letter had, indeed, given her indeſcribable ſatisfaction; her brother had ever poſſeſſed her tendereſt regard, as his happineſs was dear to her as her own; and convinced as ſhe was that it was unattainable but by a perſeverance in rectitude, his return to virtue had given her delight on her own account, and it was augmented by conſidering how pleaſed her good uncle, how happy her mother would be. With what different ſenſations did I attend to this amiable girl from what I had heretofore done, when I regarded her ſentiments as the offspring of art, inſtead of the native ſuggeſtions of an excellent heart. I now related her mother's reſolution in conſequence of having read the letter; this added to her ſatisfaction, ſhe ſpoke to me with more confidence than I could have hoped from

her appearance when I entered the room, joy had overcome the ſenſations that before agitated her. I availed myſelf of this obſervation, to lead to the purpoſe of my viſit—ſhe had not expected it—again her confuſion returned, ſhe trembled, heſitated—and at length in a voice expreſſive of her agitation, begged I would excuſe her now, ſhe was not prepared, not equal to converſe on the topic—as ſoon as ſhe regained her powers of mind, ſhe would acquaint me with her ſentiments, her determination, and its ſource. I entreated her pardon for having diſtreſſed her, but ſaid, I could not bear ſhe ſhould think me ſo deficient in what was due to her, as to delay the renewal of that ſubject which claimed my firſt conſideration; I would not now add to her diſturbance by urging my ſuit—would only ſay, if her determination, in pity to me, was favourable, I would mark my gratitude, by an unremitted attention to promote her happi-

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neſs to the laſt hour of my exiſtence. I found that it would be painful to her to reply, therefore made my bow, and returned to my apartment. When an opportunity offered, I acquainted Madame de St. Clair with what had paſſed; ſhe thanked me for my confidence, but ſaid, ſhe believed Julia had determined to decline my propoſal; ſhe would, however, inform me herſelf of her deciſion. I was ſenſible to much concern from this intelligence, and Madame de St. Clair appeared to ſhare my ſentiments. Julia retired ſoon after dinner, and remained away moſt part of the evening. I own to you, dear Moubray, I felt an uneaſy ſenſation from this circumſtance, which I could not get over; every time the door opened I thought it was her, and my diſappointment became more grievous each time—I feared ſhe was ill; I know not wherefore, but I was aſhamed to inquire; my uneaſineſs, however, was at length ſo powerful, that I aſked Mademoiſelle

moiſelle de Rancé if we ſhould not ſee her fair Couſin again ; ſhe ſaid, ſhe was writing, and when her letter was finiſhed ſhe would return : this information excited new ideas—who was ſhe writing to ? her brother perhaps, perhaps to me. I became extremely impatient—Louiſa, I fancy, obſerved it ; ſhe kindly propoſed a game at piquet, I acquieſced, but knew not a card I played ; ſhe noticed and affected to impute it to my gallantry, cheerfully ſaying, ſhe ſhould be quite offended at the contempt of her judgement, if I did not play better ; I attempted to attend more, but in vain.—Julia at length returned—I thought I could perceive that ſhe had been ſhedding tears, and that ſhe was much agitated, though ſhe aſſumed a placid look. I was greatly affected by the obſervation—is this lovely and amiable girl never to taſte tranquillity more ?—my heart demanded. I roſe, and offered her my cards ; inquired how ſhe found herſelf, and then fearing the

queſtion.

queſtion was *mal-à-propos*, would diſtreſs her, returned without waiting her anſwer. Louiſa placed her Couſin a chair near her, and then ſaid, I hope, now you are come, Julia, my good aunt will make a party at whiſt, for the Marquis is ſo inattentive at piquet, I ſhall forſwear playing with him when we have finiſhed this game. I begged her pardon, and promiſed to be on my good behaviour in future, if ſhe would extend her forgiveneſs; this little chat paſſed off the obſervation, from the confuſion that had taken place on my addreſs to Julia; but my heart entered not into the converſation, it dwelt on Julia's countenance. Her image left me not the whole night—I feel that ſhe will ſoon become ſo intereſting to me, that if I do not abſent myſelf, it will be out of my power to reſiſt her influence.

Julia has written to me, this is the copy of her letter:

"FIND-

"FINDING myſelf unequal to converſe on the ſubject you propoſed this morning, my Lord, but anxious to acquaint you with the determination you are ſolicitous to obtain, I am influenced to adopt this mode of acquainting you with my ſentiments and deciſion. Conſcious to the generoſity of your conduct, it claims my beſt acknowledgements and enſures my eſteem and gratitude. I trace the honourable motives of your propoſal, and do juſtice to the delicacy which incited your preſſing the ſubject ſo ſtrenuouſly, and urging it as a mark of my pity to your anxiety; in fine, I am ſenſible to the whole merit of your conduct on this occaſion, but though it gratifies, it does not miſlead me. I know that to your ſenſibility of the ſufferings you were an innocent cauſe of inflicting on me, and the knowledge you have obtained of the ſentiments your attentions inſpired, I owe the propoſal you make—could I brook the idea of owing your

offer

offer to commiſeration only, I cannot that of your ſacrificing your happineſs on the ſhrine of honour, I never will be a ſource of miſery to you, my Lord; you ſhall not, from a falſe idea of promoting my felicity, deſtroy your own.—Never, never could I taſte a ſatisfaction, that had embittered your life, and as nothing could perſuade me I owed your attentions to any other ſource than your pity, they would loſe all their power of beſtowing happineſs; hence, my Lord, I have reſolved to decline your generous propoſals, and my reſolution is unalterable—your ſolicitations, incited by the generoſity of your nature, may diſturb my mind, but will never induce an alteration in my ſentiments—let me, therefore, beg you will ſpare me the painful trial; time, and the exerciſe of reaſon, aided by the tender attentions of my kind friends, will reſtore me to tranquillity. I ſhall ever wiſh for your happineſs, my Lord, and ever avow my eſteem of your cha-

character; but, when we part, let it be to meet no more. I require this as a proof of your friendſhip; and our ſituation urges and juſtifies my repreſentation, that, when you are able to remove with perfect ſafety, you had better join your friends at Paris. I own that it is on my own account I make this propoſal. I am not aſhamed to confeſs, that your merits and attentions created an intereſt in my heart, but I ſhould ſhrink from the avowal, were I not ſure that my affections are ſo much under the guidance of reaſon, as to yield to whatever ſhe dictates. My late illneſs has weakened me ſo much, that it is with difficulty I write, what you will, I fear, have equal difficulty in reading; but I felt it right to inform you of my ſentiments as ſoon as poſſible. Believe me, with every good wiſh towards you,

My Lord,

Your ſincere Friend,

JULIA DE ST. CLAIR."

You

You will judge, my dear Moubray, how much my admiration and eſteem were augmented by the peruſal of this letter; the delicacy, the generoſity, of the refuſal, the candour exhibited in her avowal of regard, were calculated to excite the utmoſt degree of approbation; had ſhe been leſs lovely, I ſhould have conſidered the obtaining her, as the event of all others which would enſure my felicity, yet, under ſuch influence as ſhe was, how could I perſuade her of this; pre-determined to attribute my propoſals to a cauſe which wounded her delicacy, what expreſſions, what conduct could undeceive her? I was hopeleſs of ſucceſs, though I became more ſolicitous to gain the point of perſuading her to accept me; however, I reſolved to anſwer her letter immediately, and judged it beſt to propoſe a criterion by which ſhe ſhould judge my ſentiments. I ſat down, therefore, and wrote what follows:

"GREAT-

"GREATLY as I admire, lovely Julia, the delicacy which actuates you in your reſolution, I am too much aggrieved by it to refrain from complaining. Indeed you are unjuſt to yourſelf and me, to impute any motives to my propoſal, but thoſe of eſteem, reſpect, admiration, and tenderneſs. But determined as you are, to refuſe credit to my aſſertions on this ſubject, how ſhall I convince you of my ſincerity? Were you more ſenſible to your uncommon advantages, the beauty of your perſon, your natural and acquired graces, your amiable diſpoſition and fine mind, you might be perſuaded to believe you had inſpired the ſentiments you doubt; but your very virtues arm you againſt me; your humility and your delicacy oppoſe the admiſſion of truth: allow me, however, yet again to plead my cauſe, to offer a pledge of my ſincerity; if you refuſe this, believe me, you expoſe me to more wretchedneſs than I have yet experienced.

Had

Had we recently become acquainted, lovely Julia, can you, conſiſtently with your regard to candour, avow your diſbelief, that I might have become ſenſible to your merits, and ſolicited an union with you, as the moſt deſireable event that could ariſe to me? Wherefore then can you now diſcredit it?—My heart, ſo ſuſceptible from its ſoftened ſenſations of tender impreſſions, ſeeks ſome object to ſympathiſe in its ſentiments and feelings, and your perfections are become ſo much more conſpicuous from the inveſtigation they have had, the cruel ordeal you have paſſed, that I muſt be more ſenſible of them than I could have been otherwiſe. But ſuppoſing I did not feel that ardour of affection, which partakes more of paſſion than ſenſibility, ſurely you will deem the tenderneſs, the eſteem, and regard, which a conviction of your poſſeſſing every amiable attribute inſpires, preferable to that ſentiment which is produced by the imagination alone. Let me

be-

beſeech you to conſider theſe points—I will not urge you to accept me now, I will yield to any trial you ſhall judge neceſſary, as a proof of my ſincerity and tender regard; receive this as a pledge that I am influenced by an attachment of the ſtrongeſt and moſt permanent nature—allow me only to converſe with you, to be received as a friend, till time, or your obſervation, ſhall have convinced you of my ſentiments. If you refuſe this, I ſhall comply with your requiſition of immediately quitting the Caſtle, but my compliance will coſt me dear—for, convinced I leave all that promiſes to give happineſs to my future days, I ſhall feel a degree of miſery as poignant as durable. Adieu, loveliеſt and moſt amiable of women. Believe me,

With the trueſt tenderneſs,
And utmoſt reſpect,
Your devoted,
CHARLES DE BEAUMONT.

I had juſt ſent this, which was written in much agitation, when a packet of letters was delivered to me by my faithful Dubois. I opened them immediately, and ſent thoſe which were for Madame de St. Clair to her, knowing how impatient ſhe would be for the intelligence they conveyed. I did not take them myſelf, becauſe I ſuppoſed ſhe would prefer reading them alone, as they might contain what would greatly affect her. I found a long letter from the Baron, and one from my father; the Baron's written in the moſt friendly ſtile, gave me an account of his proceedings. He had waited on my father immediately on his arrival, was received in a manner which he dwelt on with the moſt grateful pleaſure; and took the earlieſt occaſion of communicating the cauſe of his journey; the ſentiments it produced I need not repeat, dear Moubray, as you will ſo readily trace them; I will therefore only ſay, after the firſt powerful emotions at the ſurpriſing narra-

tive

tive were ſubſided, ſatisfaction had much the moſt conſiderable ſhare in their feelings—they pitied, loved, nay, adored the ſweet Julia, and were delighted with my reſolution to offer myſelf to her. The Baron's impatience to ſecure his niece, leſt ſhe might have ſet ſpies to watch the motions of thoſe who quitted the Caſtle, and thence eſcape, made him requeſt the Duke to aſſiſt him as ſoon as poſſible to obtain the order. My father inſtantly ſat down to write, and diſpatched one of his people with the letter; in the mean time the Baron ſent to inform Dubois of his arrival, and to learn if Victoria was ſtill at Madame D'Aubigné's; the meſſenger returned with an anſwer that ſhe was, and that the Chevalier was expected in a day or two. This information rendered the Baron more ſolicitous to obtain the order, as he feared that young man would become her victim, if ſhe was not prevented exerciſing her arts on him. The Duke entered into his feelings, and

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reſolved, if there was any delay, to go himſelf and get the order. This, however, was unneceſſary, he received it by the return of his ſervant—it occurred to him then, that as Monſ. de Vernieul had gone through ſo many ſevere trials lately, and that this might prove a very affecting one, he had better offer to take it on himſelf. The Baron felt this attention ſenſibly, and thankfully accepted a releaſe, from what he ſaid, indeed, he apprehended would be too much for him. My father had ſome difficulty in obtaining an acknowledgement that Mademoiſelle de St. Clair was at the houſe, as ſhe had taken another name; however, finding refuſal fruitleſs, and that the houſe was ſo ſurrounded as to preclude all poſſibility of eſcape, Madame D'Aubigné was at length obliged to confeſs. The mind of this guilty young woman led her to ſuſpect ſomething diſagreeable, but ſhe did not apprehend what awaited her; when, therefore, the Duke, inſtead of beginning

to remonſtrate, produced the order, ſurpriſe, and the conviction that ſhe was now fruſtrated in every plan, expoſed to contempt, and doomed to a puniſhment worſe to her than death, produced ſuch an effect on her, that ſhe fell into the moſt violent hyſterics. My father retired into another apartment, and took up a book: though his attention was engaged by this, he thought the time was long, and was going to ring the bell, when Madame D'Aubigné came to him, and repreſenting how extremely ill her poor young friend was, how inhuman it would be to remove her in that ſituation, earneſtly entreated ſhe might remain where ſhe was till ſhe was better. My father ſaid ſhe knew not what ſhe aſked; ſhe wiſhed to foſter a ſerpent who would wound her incurably, and proceeded to give her a brief account of Victoria's conduct.—When he had given his hearer ſo much inſight into her plans, as, confirmed by her own recollection, convinced her how

artful and wicked her companion was, ſhe turned pale, and ſuddenly ſtarting up, ran out of the room: my father had hardly time to think whence this could proceed, when he heard a buſtle in the hall; he went out, and was aſtoniſhed to ſee Madame D'Aubigné catching hold of a young man's arm, whom ſhe endeavoured to detain, while he was in the act of drawing his ſword. The Duke went haſtily up to them; judge his ſurprize when he diſcovered in this valiant Cavalier the features of Victoria; he ſeized her arms, and obliging her to drop the ſword, Madame D'Aubigné, whom terror had ſtruck dumb, took it up, and going out of the room, ſoon returned with her ſervants; in the mean time my father ſaid, "Since, Mademoiſelle, you "have caſt off thoſe diſtinctions of your "ſex, which entitle you to reſpect, you "muſt take the conſequences of your "conduct in the rough treatment you "receive; but be aſſured, all farther ef-

"fort to elude me, all reſiſtance is vain;
"I quit ſight of you no more till you are
"lodged in a convent, and remember,
"that on your behaviour now depends the
"lenity or ſeverity you will experience."
She trembled with rage—her quivering lips loſt all colour, and her eyes ſtruck fire: my father was ſhocked, and trembled almoſt, he ſaid, as much as her from the idea which then ſtruck him of the dreadful conſequence that would have enſued had ſhe had been my wife, had his deſcendants received their birth from ſuch a woman. Deſirous to get rid of her as ſoon as poſſible, he requeſted her to attend him to the carriage. She obeyed, but ſpoke not, nor could he the whole way obtain a ſingle word from her. Sullen, and yet ſeemingly bent on ſomething deſperate, her charms were defaced by the terrible paſſions her countenance betrayed. My father deſired her, when the carriage ſtopped, to take his arm, all reſiſtance would be uſeleſs;

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therefore for her own ſake he would recommend her not to expoſe herſelf. She got out, looked wildly to the right and left, and hopeleſs, deſpairing, and diſtracted, threw herſelf on the ground; the ſervants raiſed her, and conveyed her almoſt ſenſeleſs into the convent. My father having deſired that proper care in every reſpect might be taken of her, proceeded to acquaint the Superior of the cauſe of this ſtrange circumſtance, and the occaſion of his coming; he ſhould have been entertained, he ſaid, with the grave ſurprize and ſerious concern of the good old lady on having a young man thus introduced, had his mind been in a ſtate to receive mirthful impreſſions, but it was far otherwiſe; having explained the nature of the caſe, and enforced the neceſſity of obſerving the moſt vigilant conduct in reſpect to the young lady now delivered to her care, my father took a haſty leave of the good old lady, anxious to return and relieve the mind of the

Baron, which he knew would be full of anxiety and uneaſineſs from his long ſtay on ſuch an occaſion. Monſ. de Vernieul ſays, he ſhall not attempt to deſcribe his horror at my father's narrative, which, indeed, he could hardly have borne to repeat, but as he hoped, if any tenderneſs could poſſibly lurk in my heart for this ſhocking woman, it would be totally deſtroyed by this picture of her. He then proceeds to inform me, that conſideration for poor Madame D'Aubigné, and her nephew, influenced him to make her a viſit in the evening; he found her ſcarce recovered from the agitation produced from what ſhe had ſeen, heard, and ſuffered in the morning. He announced himſelf and the occaſion of his viſit, to acquaint her at large with all that concerned her in relation to the diſcovery that had been made, and to learn by what means his niece had impoſed on her. The firſt of theſe purpoſes accompliſhed, to the aſtoniſhment and horror of

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the hearer, he requeſted her relation of Victoria's account of the affair. She told him his niece had ſurpriſed her much by her unexpected appearance, which ſhe aſſigned to the intolerable perſecution ſhe had met to enforce her acceptance of the addreſſes of the Marquis de Beaumont, which her affection for D'Aubigné would not ſuffer her to hear of—they had diſcovered her attachment by intercepting all the letters, ſhe ſuppoſed, as ſhe had not heard from him for ſome time, and that her uncle had joined in the perſecution, vowing he would not leave a Louis-d'or to her if ſhe rejected the Marquis. She was more averſe to this match, as ſhe believed the immenſe property ſhe was likely to be poſſeſſed of, was the Marquis's motive for diſtinguiſhing her —ſhe had hence been obliged, as the only means of avoiding this hateful match, to eſcape and ſeek refuge, where ſhe was aſſured the tender feelings and goodneſs of heart of her to whom ſhe ſpoke would

give it. The good lady ſaid ſhe was ſo affected by Victoria's ſtory, and the tears ſhe ſhed, that ſhe aſſured her ſhe might rely on her kindneſs and protection; it was agreed between them that Mademoiſelle ſhould change her name to avoid diſcovery, and that her nephew ſhould be ſent for immediately. Madame D'Aubigné obſerved that Victoria dwelt much on the account of her uncle's large fortune, and perſuaſion that when he found ſhe was really married to an amiable young man, as there was no remedy, he would forgive her, and leave her a conſiderable portion of his property. This ſhe now ſaw was done to intereſt her in promoting the match. Victoria had thought herſelf ſo ſecure from detection by the precautions employed, as to leave her without a ſuſpicion of being watched, or of the cauſe of the Duke's viſit. As ſoon as ſhe had recovered from her hyſteric fit (which was in a few minutes from their plunging her hand in cold water) ſhe flung

herſelf

herſelf at the feet of Madame D'Aubigné, entreating her in the moſt fervent terms to ſave her, that the Duke only took this ſtep from the ſuggeſtions of avarice, begged ſhe would aſſiſt her to eſcape, which ſhe could yet do by putting on a ſuit of her nephew's cloaths. Wrought on by her perſuaſion, Madame D'Aubigné conſented, and aſſiſted in equipping her. Victoria noticed the ſword, and ſaid ſhe would wear it, as its appearance might intimidate any body from approaching her. It was then agreed, that while ſhe was finiſhing her dreſs, Madame ſhould go down and amuſe the Duke, to prevent his hearing Victoria go out; but his relation, his proofs, aided by her own recollection, ſo ſtruck upon her mind, that ſhe now ſaw ſhe had been deceived; her conſequent anxiety to prevent Victoria's eſcape had cauſed her to make ſuch a ſudden exit, and the occaſion being ſuſpected, had incited her viſitor's employing that deſperate meaſure. She had ſince re-

recollected her nephew's complaining of not hearing from Mademoiſelle de St. Clair, and that he had reſolved to go to Villars-Coteret immediately on his return from the journey he had now taken, but Victoria had artfully accounted for not writing, by ſaying the letters were intercepted. Madame D'Aubigné was very grateful for the attention the Baron had marked to ſave her nephew from deſtruction, and expreſſed her thankfulneſs to Providence, which had counteracted ſuch deep deſigns at the moment almoſt of their completion. The Chevalier was expected the next day; he had been written to immediately, and his miſtreſs urged him to uſe expedition, leſt her cruel relations ſhould learn where ſhe was, and force her from him; when ſhe was his wife, their authority would ceaſe. Had power ſeconded his inclination, ſhe was ſure her nephew had been with them, had married this artful young woman ere the Baron's arrival, but he was happily

pily prevented ſetting out immediately; only the interpoſition of an Almighty hand could have ſaved the innocent from falling a victim to ſuch deep laid plans, and expoſed the perfidious inventor to detection. This was the ſubſtance of the Baron's converſation with Madame D'Aubigné, which ended in his requeſting the acquaintance of her nephew, whom he thought himſelf bound to ſerve, could the Chevalier point out an occaſion: as he had received ſuch injury from one branch of his family, the others were engaged by principle, he conceived, to make him an atonement if poſſible. The good lady was much pleaſed with this aſſurance, as ſhe is extremely fond of her nephew, and conſequently ſolicitous for the promotion of his intereſts. (I ſhall engage my father to ſecond Monſ. de Vernieul's intentions.) The next day the Baron went to the convent to inquire for his niece, he was informed, that having complained of being very ill, ſhe had been put to bed

immediately after his departure, where ſhe had been ſeized with ſuch ſhivering fits, ſucceeded by burning heats, that they apprehended a violent fever was approaching, and had ſent for a phyſician, who pronounced it to be the ſmall pox, (this aſtoniſhed me, as ſhe was always ſuppoſed to have had it in her infancy) he obſerved, this was a very uſual effect of the paſſions being violently agitated; he could not decide on the caſe at preſent, whether dangerous or not, but ſhould be better able to judge the next day; ſhe had been delirious, and expreſſed herſelf in the moſt bitter and furious terms againſt her family, the Baron in particular, and vowed a revenge the moſt ſevere.

Monſieur de Vernieul was ſhocked at this information, pity abſorbed every ſentiment of anger; he gave the ſtrongeſt injunctions for every care poſſible to be taken of her, and returning to the hotelle, acquainted my father with the circumſtance,

cumſtance, conſulting him whether he had beſt give notice of the matter to his ſiſter-in-law; the Duke ſtrongly recommended her being adviſed of it inſtantly, in caſe of danger, as ſhe might wiſh to ſee her child, to ſpeak of repentance, and to extend her pardon if ſought. It was, therefore, concluded to diſpatch Dubois inſtantly, and my father inſiſted on Madame de St. Clair's making his houſe her home, and bringing her daughter and niece with her, if ſhe did not, my mother told the Baron ſhe ſhould herſelf go to fetch them; ſhould the ſweet Julia refuſe, from the idea of not chuſing to be in the houſe with me —was ſhe diſpoſed to be cruel—they would requeſt me to give place, and ſeek a home among my friends—for they would not give up a daughter for a ſon, adding, ſhe would write herſelf, however, to urge the point. The Baron charmed with their conduct and expreſſions, informs me he has written ſtrongly

to

to Madame de St. Clair, to induce her compliance, and owns, he ſhall feel a ſevere diſappointment if any obſtacle ariſes to prevent his alliance to a family he regards as much as reſpects. He hopes no impediment of continued indiſpoſition on the part of Julia or myſelf, will prevent our attending Madame de St. Clair, if it ſhould, begs we will follow as ſoon as poſſible. This is the purport of the good Baron's letter, which produced emotions the moſt various and complicated in my mind; horror and compaſſion were excited by Victoria's conduct and ſituation; ſcarcely could I aſcertain what ſentiment was moſt predominant. As I was ruminating on theſe ſtrange events, Madame de St. Clair ſent to beg I would attend her in her dreſſing room; I inſtantly complied, though I juſt then recollected I had not opened my father's letter—I ſhould have told you that the Baron in a P. S. requeſted me not to mention the particulars

of

of his niece's conduct to her mother, on his meeting her, as it would increaſe her concern unneceſſarily. I reſolved, therefore, to be on my guard. When I joined this unhappy parent, I diſcovered the impreſſion of grief ſtrong on her countenance; ſhe did not immediately ſpeak, but pointed to a chair beſide her; I judged it would be a relief to her overcharged heart, if I ſpoke firſt; I, therefore, aſſured her I entered into all her affliction with the ſympathy of a ſincere friend; I begged ſhe would conſider me as ſuch, confide in me, employ me, empower me to conſole and to ſerve her by every means in my power. A torrent of tears, which now guſhed from her eyes, reſtored her the power of utterance, ſhe thanked me in the moſt fervent terms, expreſſing a ſenſe of my conduct I could not think it deſerved; ſhe then ſaid, ſhe did, indeed, conſider me as a friend, ſhe had, therefore, deſired to conſult me on the ſteps ſhe had better take, owned her-

ſelf extremely anxious to ſet out immediately for Paris, "for," ſaid this amiable woman, "though my daughter has acted "unworthily, ſhe is ſtill my child; ſhe has "forfeited my good opinion, but is never- "theleſs, entitled to my parental care. "Duty and maternal affections prompt "me to attend her on this occaſion, and "as the diſorder is of ſo critical a nature, "I wiſh to ſet out immediately. The "Ducheſs has done me the honor and "the kindneſs to preſs my coming to "her, in ſuch terms, as preclude refuſal, "though I am loth on ſuch an occaſion "to avail myſelf of her obliging offer.--- "I ſhall ſet out, I think, as ſoon as I "can have a few things put up. I have "not yet ſpoken to Julia—I fear ſhe will "object to following me, as the delicacy "of her feelings have influenced her to "decline your flattering propoſals; I "cannot interfere, however ardent my "wiſh. If ſhe ſhould not comply, I "would requeſt the favour of your at-

"tendance,

" tendance, if you think yourſelf equal
" to undertake travelling as my impa-
" tience would lead me to do; if, on the
" contrary, ſhe conſents, I will beg you
" to ſtay, and eſcort her and Louiſa."
I promiſed Madame de St. Clair to do whatever ſhe deſired, and ſaid, I ſhould go immediately to give the neceſſary orders, in caſe it was determined that I ſhould accompany her, which I was ſure my health would enable me to do: ſhe would inform me as ſoon as poſſible, ſhe ſaid, of Julia's ſentiments. I then proceeded to give orders, and while they were executing, read my father's letter; it was written in the moſt affectionate terms; he caſt not the leaſt reflection on me, but ſympathiſed in the tendereſt manner in my ſufferings—expreſſed his high admiration of Julia, whoſe letters to her friend the Baron had ſhewn him, and declared, the firſt wiſh of his heart was, to ſee us united, for he was ſatisfied ſhe poſſeſſed the ſentiments, feelings,

and

and qualities, which would enſure my happineſs. As it was evident I had inſpired the affection in her boſom, which would engage her to prefer me, and as I muſt be ſenſible to ſuch uncommon excellence, I had, indeed, fulfilled his wiſh, of offering myſelf to her, he hoped no circumſtance would ariſe to prevent our union.—I read this letter with infinite ſatisfaction, as expreſſive of a parent's affection and approbation, whom I ſo loved and reſpected; but yet pleaſure was not ſole tenant of my breaſt, ſuſpenſe, anxiety, and fear, ſhared in the emotions I was ſenſible of. I apprehended Julia's rejection, and the idea of quitting her, of bidding her adieu, perhaps, a final adieu, occurred with ſuch acute feelings of concern, as convinced me her influence was greater than I could have conceived (though ſenſible to her lovelineſs and faſcinating powers) it would have been, in ſuch a ſhort term; my heart too, ſo recently prepoſſeſſed by another,

another, and ſo prejudiced againſt her; but circumſtances are ſometimes ſo powerful, they contain ſuch intereſting matter, create ſuch affecting ſcenes, as to perſons, whoſe hearts enter ſtrongly into the claims of ſenſibility and ſympathy, produce effects in a few days, which leſs animated beings, who had either never engaged in ſuch occurrences, or viewed them with quieter feelings, would deem impoſſible. Short has been the period of Julia's return, of my intercourſe, but it has been ſo marked, it has ſo powerfully excited every tender feeling, that had ſhe been leſs beautiful, ſhe muſt have impreſſed my heart with ſentiments of the moſt affectionate and intereſting nature.

Madame de St. Clair has been with me. You will wiſh, dear Moubray, to learn Julia's determination, and as I ſhall have an opportunity of ſending this immenſe packet immediately on my arrival at Paris, therefore, muſt cloſe it; I will add

add her deciſion, though not very equal to it, as much agitated from the hurry of ſpirits it has occaſioned, and the ſhort time allotted me to perform it. She ſhewed my laſt letter to her mother, acknowledging it had affected her much, it had even weakened her reſolution, but ſhe could not yield a determination haſtily, which ſhe had made on ſuch good ground, for ſhe had conſidered the point thoroughly; ſhe would, however, conſent to my propoſition of trying the effect of time; if in the expiration of a year or two I ſtill continued to prefer her, ſhe was then ready to liſten to my addreſſes, but in the interim, ſhe deſired me not to conſider myſelf as bound by any engagement, as that would defeat her purpoſe. I was to conſider myſelf perfectly free and to cultivate the acquaintance of every amiable female who might attract my attention; if ſhe was found worthy my attachment, or engaged my affection, I was at liberty to make her mine, without being deem-

ed

ed obnoxious to cenſure. As we were circumſtanced, ſhe concluded it better not to attend her mother to Paris—ſhe was in ſome degree reconciled to her going alone, as ſhe was ſatisfied that every attention would be paid her; in caſe of our meeting during the propoſed term of trial, ſhe ſhould receive me as a friend.—This was the purport of Madame de St. Clair's communication; though it was calculated to excite my approbation, to ſatisfy my reaſon, I yet was too ſenſible to diſappointment and concern, to acknowledge as it I ought. Madame de St. Clair read my thoughts in my penſive countenance. "I wiſh," ſaid ſhe, "my dear Marquis, Julia "were as well acquainted with your "heart as I am, ſhe would no longer "heſitate to accept you, to enſure her "happineſs and your's; but her diffi-"dence, her delicacy, prevent her judg-"ing aright—ſhe ſees your conduct in "a wrong point of view; knowing you

"ami-

"amiable and noble minded, ſhe be-
"lieves you capable of ſacrificing your-
"ſelf to perform a juſt or generous deed;
"ſhe fears you are influenced by this
"greatneſs of mind: I cannot blame her,
"indeed, I glory in my child — but,
"if ſhe finds you perſevere, and is
"convinced that, to preference, not
"honour, ſhe owes your propoſal, ſhe
"will be induced to yield her determi-
"nation, and accelerate an event that
"ſhe obſerves, is deſired by all parties."
Theſe kind obſervations ſerved to con-
ſole me much, I thanked Madame de
St. Clair moſt ardently for the kind ſug-
geſtions, and owned, that her lovely
daughter's deciſion had ſtrengthened my
admiration and eſteem, though it had
occaſioned me great uneaſineſs; the
thought of being ſeparated from her was
painful beyond expreſſion, however, I
would ſummons my reſolution to aſſiſt
me. Madame de St. Clair made her
excuſes for quitting me abruptly, on oc-
caſion

caſion of expediting her preparation. I aſked if her lovely daughter was averſe to my bidding her adieu; ſhe knew not, but thought, if I did not earneſtly deſire it, it were better not; however, ſhe left it entirely to me. I heſitated and remained undecided for a conſiderable time after ſhe left me; to quit the place without ſeeing her, without offering my good wiſhes, expreſſing my acknowledgements of her late generous conduct, or aſſuring her of my faithful attachment, without again beholding her lovely countenance, appeared inſupportable, yet to riſk the wounding her delicacy, or giving her a moment's pain, was more diſquieting to me; if ſhe was ſtill intereſted for me, ſhe would be agitated, my obſervation on it would diſtreſs her: I concluded it beſt, therefore, to debar myſelf the painful pleaſure of ſeeing her, to ſay, adieu. I ſat down, however, to write a ſhort farewell; if it did any juſtice to my feelings, it would expreſs my

tender-

tenderneſs, admiration, and reſpect, in a a manner calculated to convince her of my ſincerity---for when the heart ſpeaks, it enforces belief. I deſired Dubois to give this to her, if ſhe was in the drawing room, if not, to leave it with her woman: I rather wiſhed ſhe might have it before I went, as ſhe might otherwiſe be hurt at ſeeing me depart, without expreſſing ſome opinion of her deciſion, or offering my good wiſhes. Dubois met her, and delivered the note, he obſerved that Mademoiſelle bluſhed, and it made her look very charming. You know our ſervants here are accuſtomed to give their opinions, not that I approve of it, I think your reſerve on theſe points infinitely more judicious. I could not, however, reprimand him, for he meant no offence, it was the cuſtom of the country, and he had, beſides, gained upon me ſo much, from his late proofs of attachment, that I could not hurt him, by checking his familiarity on this occaſion,

though

though it wounded me. He informed me, Madame was almoſt ready; I have written to the laſt minute—and have neither time or inclination to look it over, the various influences of mind under which it has been marked down, the interruptions I have met, the different periods of writing it, when conſidered, will, I am perſuaded, plead effectually its apology with you, even though you were diſpoſed to criticiſe a friend; as you are not, as you will know it is the communication of one who regards you, who from that regard is influenced to relate all he knows your affection for him renders intereſting, I feel no apprehenſions of your wanting indulgence for this MS. of dear Moubray,

Your faithful friend,

CHARLES DE BEAUMONT.

P S. I add another half ſheet to my volume, while Madame de St. Clair is taking ſome ſoup, at the earneſt re-

quiſition of her daughter, preparatory to her journey, to inform you of an intereſting event, that has occurred ſince I concluded my letter. As I could not go into the drawing room to wait for Madame, I concluded on taking a turn in the garden till ſhe was ready, telling Dubois where he would find me; as I walked penſively along a narrow ſhaded walk, that leads to a labyrinth, I heard a voice which my heart inſtantly recognized as the melodious accent of Julia; I ſtopt, uncertain what to do, I feared her ſeeing me might ſurpriſe her painfully, yet if I remained not where I was, ſhe muſt; if I did, I muſt overhear her converſation, for ſhe was approaching with her friend Louiſa into the next walk. I preferred what I conſidered the ſmaller evil; as they drew near I could diſcern them very clearly, by means of an aperture in the high hedge between us. Judge my agitation when I ſaw

the letter I had juſt written to her, in the hand of Julia, Louiſa was ſpeaking—I ſcarcely heard what—but her fair Couſin ſtopping, turned half towards her, and ſaid, "I own it, dear "Louiſa, it ſeems the language of "truth, it perſuades me I am, indeed, "beloved—but conſcious as I am "how much my wiſhes tend to flatter "this belief, I dare not give myſelf "up to the pleaſing idea, leſt it de-"ceive me; yet how different are "theſe letters from thoſe I formerly re-"ceived; they enforced doubts, I was "hurt and aſhamed at entertaining, "for I thought it implied, that my "affection was ſtronger than the Mar-"quis's, or an impeachment his cha-"racter placed him above the deſer-"ving; wherefore ſhould he em-"ploy art to deceive me, even if ca-"pable of it—yet his language was "not methough tthat of the heart; his "manners, his voice, all tended to

" bring ſuſpicion to my mind—but
" now how pleaſing the reverſe; every
" word, action, and look, tends to per-
" ſuade me I am really eſſential to his
" happineſs, that I have created in him
" that intereſt, and thoſe ſentiments
" on which all my felicity depends;
" but I repeat to you, dear Louiſa, the
" apprehenſion of deceiving myſelf,
" as we are naturally diſpoſed to be-
" lieve what we wiſh, makes me re-
" ſolve to adhere to my reſolution—if
" the Marquis feels that attachment
" which makes his preference deſire-
" able, as the effect of a conviction
" I poſſeſs the ſentiments requiſite to
" make him happy, time will only
" ſtrengthen them; ſhould his pro-
" feſſions, or preſent feelings, ariſe
" from a ſenſe of honour, or a tran-
" ſient impulſe of ſenſibility and en-
" thuſiaſm, I ought to conſole myſelf
" that I made the trial—if I cannot
" make him happy, I never ſhould be

" ſo

"ſo myſelf." Louiſa was going to reply, when a ſervant came to inform them Madame de St. Clair wiſhed now to ſee them in her own apartment; they quickened their pace, and I ſoon loſt ſight of them.—But Julia, the angelic Julia's image was impreſſed on my heart ſo forcibly, that no circumſtance of time or abſence could ever, I was ſure, deſtroy its power—her words vibrated on my ear, how grateful was their ſenſe to my heart—I had doubted of her ſentiments, thought the ſufferings I had occaſioned, and the long miſerable interval, in which there had been no communication, might have deprived me of her affection; the aſſurance of being ſtill ſo tenderly cheriſhed in her heart, and the delicate proof of her diſintereſted regard, affected me with a ſenſation of delight, ſo exquiſite, as conſoled me under the circumſtances of our preſent ſeparation.—I returned with very dif-

ferent feelings from thoſe which had oppreſſed me in quitting the houſe.—The carriage is driving into the court-yard—Madame de St. Clair waits. Adieu, my dear friend, once more.

The Counteſs DE LAUSAN *to Sir* HENRY MOUBRAY.

Paris,

GREAT ſouls are above being reſtrained by forms that bind plebeian ſpirits—*hence*, I ſuppoſe, the Caſſandras and Cleopatras of old were privileged to wander about *unchaperon'd* with their lovers—you are a letter in my debt—but, as I obſerved, ſouls like mine attend not to ſuch forms: I want to communicate my exploits, and as you have an intereſt in them through your friend, and have a moſt agreeable faculty of ſaying civil things

things—why I reſolved to oblige you and *myſelf.* If you deny that I am a greater heroine than Clelia, Statira, Caſſandra, &c. in ancient romance, or any of the Agathas, Arabellas, or Amarandas of modern novel, in the proof I am about to adduce, I will employ my valiant Knight—of the handſome viſage—(I know you will allow Lauſan is handſome) to challenge you to ſingle combat, *and prove you wrong, by murdering you.* The proof is this—Finding that the object of every body's ardent wiſhes, viz. the union of Charles, Marquis de Beaumont, with Julia de St. Clair was delayed, becauſe my Lady Sentiment and Miſs Delicacy entered their caveat, I reſolved to ſtrike a bold ſtroke, to accelerate an event ſo deſirable; for like Mrs. Harley, in Falſe Delicacy, I thought happineſs too precious a commodity to be ſacrificed to pretty fancies: being very ſure alſo of my ground, I employed a meaſure, which, I hope, you will tell me *inſured*

ſucceſs, from being the reſult of an union of judgement with genius; ſuppoſing this refreſhing application of *cordial flattery* made by your diſcernment, I proceed to give you, if poſſible, a regular account of what has paſſed ſince the Marquis's return: I ſay, if poſſible, becauſe my head is ſo giddy with the applauſe I have met, and my heart ſo happy, in the idea of having contributed to make thoſe I love ſo, that regularity, order, or preciſion will be very difficult to me. Your friend, I underſtand, acquainted you with every circumſtance previous to his journey—a pretty curious, extraordinary aſſemblage they are, and have ſolved the myſtery that ſo perplexed me. Well; but I muſt try once more to begin my hiſtory. The Marquis and Madame de St. Clair arrived about a week ago---the youth *il penſeroſo* for removal from his love---the matron in grief on account of her child's illneſs. I was at the Duke's, flirting with the Baron de Vernieul, whom I

have

have choſen for my *ceciſbio*, when they arrived. I thought the ſcene would be too much in the diſmals without me, and as we have had a tint or two, too much of the *ſombre* for ſome months, concluded a *brightening influence* would be "perfectly agreeable," (as our peripatetic travelling countryman Hackman ſays on all occaſions)—perhaps you have never heard of this original, I'll ſerve him up in a ſecond courſe, *i. e.* a poſtſcript, for I won't have an *entremets* now, though it were an ortolan; I, therefore, employed all my brilliant powers to baniſh the gloom, ceremony, and aukwardneſs, &c. &c. of this meeting, and ſucceeded ſo admirably, that we were almoſt cheerful before we ſeparated. As I am an honeſt ſort of a young woman, I will confeſs that I believe Madame de St. Clair's compoſure aroſe *as much* from hearing her daughter was out of danger, as from my agreeable livelineſſes. Perhaps vanity may have as great a ſhare as honeſty in

producing this avowal---we are rather apt, I think, to dignify our follies by ſome fine name, as well as ſoften our vices by delicate epithets. *I may* ſaucily fancy I have ſo much real merit as not to need the addition of aſſumed excellence. "What! at it again?" as *my friend* the Vicar ſays.---More digreſſion! Well, I'll try to get into the turnpike road again. The next day the Marquis paid me a viſit, and told his piteous tale. You muſt allow I am a good confident, if you refuſe my pretenſions to the rank of a heroine.---From the firſt time of his ſeeing the lovely ſiſters to the moment he quitted the Chateau, and heard his ſweet Julia confeſs her affection and delicate fears, he then expatiated ſo fully, and ſo long on her perfections, that I perceived he was completely ſmitten. The thought then ſtruck me which I afterwards adopted. I encouraged him, as in *duty bound*, and promiſed my beſt aſſiſtance to promote the ſpeedy accompliſhment of his wiſhes.

wiſhes. He gave me the moſt rapturous thanks, and ſaid I ſtill preſerved my claim to the title of his guardian angel. In the evening I paid the Ducheſs a private viſit; ſhe was the only perſon I truſted with my ſcheme. Having obtained her acquieſcence, and Lauſan's approbation, I ſet out the next morning for the Chateau de Villars-Coteret, and only ſtopped to change horſes during the journey. On my arrival I was introduced to a dreſſing-room, where I found the charming friends. I diſtinguiſhed Julia inſtantly; the Marquis, though a lover, had not flattered: indeed, it was nearly impoſſible to exaggerate her charms; but they are almoſt as indeſcribable as the lovely Elwina, (though in a different ſtile;) for, beſides every advantage of perſon, features, and complection, they poſſeſs that *irreſiſtible charm* of expreſſion. This gives an intereſt and power to their lovelineſs, which engages our minds as well as hearts, and renders their influence

complete. You may have obſerved, that we women are fond of deſcribing dreſs---I believe we are; and as more depends on it, in diſcovering the character of our minds, than many are aware of, it is not ſo puerile a propenſity always as it is deemed. Whatever my motive is in it, you will of courſe indulge me, as this letter is written chiefly for the purpoſe of pleaſing you, my good Couſin.——Julia had on a white ſarſenet robe, which hung full and long from her ſlender waiſt, where it was confined by a broad brown riband, drawn in alſo by narrow ribands of the ſame colour in the body, and round her neck a fine muſlin handkerchief, open only at the throat, appeared ſcarcely ſo white as her ſkin; a profuſion of pale ſilver brown hair hung in curls over her ſhoulders, and below her waiſt; her only ornament on the head was a white riband, placed as if merely to prevent the hair from falling over her face. This ſimple, yet elegant attire, gave additional effect

to the intereſt her beauty had created; it was deſcriptive of her diſpoſition, and every part appropriate. I diſlike thoſe ornamental parts of dreſs which have no deſign. A girdle ſhould confine a looſe robe, or fancy dreſs, and not be wore unmeaningly with a gown, or, of all incongruities in dreſs, round a jacket. In ſhort, I like conſiſtency in all things, and fancy I can diſcover coquettry, ſluttiſhneſs, folly, prudery, good ſenſe, propriety, and delicacy in the character, by the different garbs aſſumed. Now to proceed---As the ſervant had announced my name, Julia aroſe from her drawing, and approaching me, ſaid, "If I am not miſ-"taken, Madam, you are a relation of "the Beaumont family;" and, ſeating me, preſented her Couſin. I declare to you I was ſo ſtruck with the *tout enſemble* of this lovely girl, that I could not immediately anſwer her; but recollecting myſelf, I ſaid, that I had the honour of being connected with them by marriage.

riage. "We have heard the Marquis "ſpeak of you in terms of the ſtrongeſt "gratitude and admiration," ſaid Mademoiſelle de Rancé; "your kindneſs "to his family and himſelf, on a very "melancholy occaſion, were repeatedly "the ſubject of his praiſe." After ſome pretty kind of chit-chat like this, I proceeded to ſignify the cauſe of my viſit--- a favourable incident furniſhed me with an opportunity, that was very propitious. When the ceremonial common-place converſation, preſcribed by form between ſtrangers was pretty near exhauſted, I roſe, and walking towards the table, begged to ſee Julia's drawings. She was copying a beautiful figure of Hope. I could not reſtrain a ſmile. She obſerved it, and to conceal its effect, took her port-folio to look for ſome other piece. In her agitation, ſhe held it ſo as to occaſion all the contents to fall out. A miniature fell at my feet; I picked it up, and inſtantly exclaimed, almoſt unconſciouſly,

ſciouſly, "the Marquis!" The remains of a former bluſh had ſcarcely left her cheek; it was now heightened to the deepeſt ſuffuſion. I took her hand---
"Pardon my want of conſideration,
"ſweet Julia, I have diſtreſſed you, but
"conſider me not as a ſtranger; I am
"not one in your reſpect; I have long
"known your virtues, long loved your
"character; let me beſeech you to throw
"off all reſerve; conſider me as a friend
"---I feel all the ſentiments of one for
"you, and am about to give you, and
"your amiable couſin, whom I wiſh to in-
"clude in our bond of amity, a proof
"of it, by employing the freedom of
"one---I am abſolutely come to run
"away with you both. You are ſur-
"prized, but it is true. I have made
"this journey on purpoſe; my glory is
"engaged, and I hope you won't uſe a
"new friend ſo ill as to tarniſh that, and
"expoſe her to be laughed at for her un-
"ſucceſsful attempt. Let us ſit down,

"and

" and talk the matter over quietly." I ſaw ſhe was unable to anſwer me without diſtreſſing herſelf. " It is certain, my " dear Mademoiſelle, that an union be- " tween you and the Marquis will take " place---his affections are irrevocably " your's; you have no objection to him; " your delicacy and diffidence alone place " an obſtacle; his friends and your's are " anxiouſly ſolicitous for the event: thus " the happineſs of ſo many whom you " love depends on you. Truſt me I " honour your feelings too much, I hold " the ſentiment that actuates you too ſa- " cred, and am too much intereſted in " the female glory, to be capable of a " wiſh to influence you to deviate in any " degree from what a delicate propriety " enjoins; but I am convinced you are " actuated here by unneceſſary apprehen- " ſions. The Marquis feels for you eve- " ry ſentiment you could wiſh a lover to " be influenced by in his preference; " never can he meet one ſo capable of

" making

" making him happy; and allowing,
" what, however, I think impoſſible, he
" were to find an object that might ex-
" cite his admiration, it is very improba-
" ble that ſhe ſhould be, in every reſpect,
" a deſirable connection; hence what
" new vexations would ariſe?—and you,
" lovely Julia, would become the vic-
" tim of your too great delicacy and ge-
" neroſity; for I know that affection in a
" mind like your's is not ſoon eradicated.
" You need not be aſhamed, my ſweet
" friend, to avow your affection, for it is
" an honour to you. The merit of its
" object, the pains taken to inſpire it,
" and the circumſtances which have ari-
" ſen to cheriſh it, all conſpire to make
" it dignify rather than degrade your
" character. Conſider theſe points, and
" recollect you are addreſſed by one who
" has ſhared all your preſent feelings—
" who has known doubt, ſuſpenſe, fear,
" hope, and all the conſequences of a
" genuine affection, therefore is capable

" of

" of judging your ſentiments, and enter-
" ing into your opinions." There was no occaſion for this lovely girl to pronounce her ideas on the different parts of my diſcourſe: I traced them all in her expreſſive countenance—and ſome of the Marquis's deſcriptions occurred; when on my mentioning her affection, her lovely eyes were caſt on the ground, her long ſilken eye-laſhes ſhading the cheeks, ſuffuſed by the bluſh of genuine delicacy—ſhe was at that moment peculiarly beautiful. My laſt words fulfilled the purpoſe for which I deſigned them; they re-aſſured her—ſhe looked up, and, as ſoon as I had concluded, ſaid, " I am
" convinced, my dear Madam, by your
" arguments; your kindneſs gives them
" an irreſiſtible power; my ſcruples
" yield to your reaſoning and your good-
" neſs. Since you have deigned to take
" ſuch pains to perſuade me, and with
" ſuch an unqueſtionable claim to decide
" on points of propriety," (it was my

turn

turn to bluſh now) " aſſure me my ſcru-
" ples are ill-founded, ſince alſo the hap-
" pineſs of others, they condeſcend to
" ſay, depends on my compliance—I
" forego my determination—I conſent to
" return with you, and to acquieſce in
" whatever meaſures my friends and the
" Marquis may deem proper." — De-
lighted with the ſweetneſs, the candour,
and goodneſs, diſplayed in this conceſ-
ſion, (*not to notice the gratification of ſelf-
love*) I marked my approbation of it in
the terms my ſtrong admiration dictated.
I congratulated my new friend Louiſa,
(whom I would endeavour to do juſtice
to, for ſhe is a charming good girl, but
that I have not time) ſhe applauded and
felicitated her Couſin; in ſhort, it was a
little jubilee—pleaſure, I believe, reign-
ed in every heart. When we became a
little ſedate---I mean Louiſa and me, for
Julia was ſtill ſweetly ſerious, I begged
ſome refreſhment. I fancied Mademoi-
ſelle de Rancé thought ringing of bells

was

was an appropriate conſequence of our converſation, for ſhe began to play them ſo continually, that the ſervants came running up, in the moſt violent hurry, to learn the cauſe of this unuſual peal, for Louiſa is naturally as gentle as her mild Couſin: had there been a hundred, they would have been employed to get one thing or another. A thouſand pardons were aſked for the omiſſion, but I ſoon ſtopped apologies, and ſat down in great comfort to an excellent collation. Well! to make ſhort of my ſtory, as my *fellow-proſers* ſay, when they have told one five hours long---after ſome neceſſary preparations I brought my nymphs off in triumph, and landed them in my own houſe, not a creature of the two families, but the Ducheſs and Madame de St. Clair, knowing, or ſuſpecting what I had been about, for I gave out that I was confined with the tooth-ach. Immediately on my return Lauſan went to the Duke's hotelle, and apprized his aunt of our arrival:

what

what follows is principally grave or affecting, and as my humour don't ſerve at preſent for ſuch deſcription, I will reſign that part of the hiſtory to the Marquis, and bid you adieu. I don't ſay a word about ſeeing you, becauſe I won't touch a diſſonant chord—I wiſh we could all meet with hearts ſo tuned to harmony, by the charming miſtreſs of ſweet concords, Felicity, as to make each take a part in the band who celebrate her orgies. Lauſan unites with me in every good wiſh, and every kind remembrance. Believe me,

Dear Sir Henry,

Your ſincere friend,

and affectionate humble ſervant,

CLARA DE LAUSAN.

P. S. I had almoſt forgot Hacky, as he is called; the following are a few traits in his character, which have ſerved, as any thing does, for a warm diſpute, whether he is moſt knave or fool. He is a native

native of Henly, it ſeems, and poſſeſſes a ſmall property of about a hundred a year; I muſt premiſe, that he has acquired a ſingular habit of ſpreading his hand, raiſing it to his face, and putting his thumb to his chin whenever he ſpeaks; and when this happens, he ſcarcely ever exceeds the ſentence of "*It's* perfectly "agreeable to me" to do ſuch a thing, generally ſomething that is to promote his ſatisfaction. One morning he told his mother, a widow, that he was going to take a little walk, in which little walk he employed ſix years, and actually travelled on foot all over France and the Auſtrian Netherlands, without knowing any thing of the French or any other language, ſave *argent*, *diligence* (by which he ſent his wardrobe) and *valice*. Whenever he came to any town, he found means to learn whether there were any Engliſh families; if there were, he took up his abode at ſome of the hotels till he had paid them all a breakfaſt, dinner, or ſup-

per

per viſit, nor would he take a denial. A lady who reſided in Flanders, and is remarkably ſhy, not chuſing to receive him, put herſelf to the inconvenience of going out to breakfaſt three ſucceſſive mornings to avoid him, but in vain, it was *perfectly agreeable* to Hacky to ſee her, and when that is the caſe, few can ſtand againſt his perſeverance—he would have ſtaid a year in the place. At B——, which he had viſited once or twice, previous to Lord T—— being our Miniſter at that court, he waited on his Lordſhip, and ſignified that it would be *perfectly agreeable* to him to go to the ball given at the Palace that evening. Lord T—— was aſtoniſhed, for Hacky's figure is not very prepoſſeſſing, or his appearance elegant, but, conſiſtently with his good humour, few people poſſeſs more, he liſped out he would inquire if ſuch a thing was feaſible, and begged his name—"Hack-"man—Oh, their Highneſſes know me "very well! they'll be very glad to ſee "me."

"me." Lord T—— inquired, found as he repreſented, that he would meet a gracious reception. The A— D——s ſmiled, and ſaid, Yes; Mr. Hackman was an old acquaintance, ſhe ſhould have great pleaſure in ſeeing him; accordingly Hacky made his uſual preparations, took his *white ſattin breeches* out of his portmanteau. This paraphernalia ſo oppoſite to Yorick's, will not be the only circumſtance in which you will judge theſe travellers are *rather* of oppoſite complections; yet I don't think Hackman can be claſſed among the "ſimple travellers," though ſome call him the ſtupid one, as he never ſpeaks or can give any account of what he has ſeen, or where he has been. A *fancy uniform* was next unpacked, a dreſs ſomebody had told him was, like his gold, a *paſſe-par-tout*. Hacky's own taſte being called forth on this occaſion, diſplayed itſelf to the univerſal aſtoniſhment, if not admiration, of all beholders—a ſcarlet coat faced with

blue

blue ſattin, and a white ſattin waiſtcoat, ſplendidly decorated with gold and ſilver embroidered lappels, formed this elegant and taſty dreſs. Theſe put on, Hacky looked out a clean pair of ſtockings and ſhoes, which he put in his pocket, and thus equipped, at a proper time, walked to the grand ſtaircaſe of the palace, there he ſat himſelf down, and very compoſedly completed his dreſs, putting on his clean ſhoes, &c. and giving the dirty ones their place in his pocket; he then went to the ball-room, and having made *his beſt bow* to the A———s, who ſmiled her recognition of him (no converſation could paſs, as her Royal Highneſs does not ſpeak Engliſh) ſhe, with great good humour, appointed him a partner, one of the prettieſt women in the room. He dances as well as he converſes, therefore you may judge the delight of the fair one, and will trace *the ſource* of the pleaſure his preſence gave at Court. I own I feel ſo much for the honour of my country,

that I don't quite reliſh this circumſtance, as ſome may think Hacky a ſample of the Engliſh, and not conſider every country has its ridiculous characters.—One anecdote more, and I think I ſhall have deſcribed Hacky ſo completely, as to enable you to decide what claſs of characters he is to be ranked among. He heard, when at Chaud-Fontaine, that a foreign nobleman of high rank gave a ſplendid entertainment to a ſelect party of the nobleſſe; Hacky put on his uniform, and preſenting himſelf to the company, made his *beſt bow* to the maſter of the houſe: every body inquired who he was? who had introduced him?—no intelligence could be gained. The nobleman inquired of his ſervants in Hacky's preſence, their incapacity to inform him, and his gueſt's ſtrange appearance, occaſioned his giving this unexpected viſitor ſome looks ſufficiently expreſſive of his ſenſe of the intruſion; but our countryman was proof againſt theſe; he found

himſelf comfortable, and reſolved to remain ſo. After dinner a curious and expenſive wine was handed round; Hacky thought it excellent, and therefore helped himſelf to it repeatedly in preference to every other, though the reſt of the company refrained, from conſiderations of delicacy. When he had *ſatisfied his ſentiment* by eating and drinking to his heart's content, he made another *beſt bow*, and walked home as well pleaſed as if he had acted with the moſt unqueſtionable propriety. Now what do you think of Hacky? Though I am ſenſible to ſome humiliating ſenſations in knowing this abſurd creature degrades the Engliſh character abroad, yet, turning, as we are happily ſo prone to do when vexed, to ſome ſubject of reflection that may conſole, I derive great comfort from conſidering, that if Hackman and ſome others diſgrace us on the Continent, there are others who place our character in the higheſt point of reſpectability. The

names of Hanway, Thornton, and Howard diſplay its humanity and philanthropy; of Thurlow and Pitt, Fox and Burke, ſupport its claim to ſterling ſenſe and fine genius; a Heathfield and a Rodney illuſtrate its generoſity, magnanimity, and bravery, and a thouſand heroes prove its courage. Above all, to mark its union of greatneſs with goodneſs—we have a Sovereign whoſe virtues are honoured by every heart capable of diſtinguiſhing and preferring what is truly valuable in human nature. I wiſh that with ſo much of what is honorary to the Britiſh name, I was not obliged to recollect what will prove a ſerious and eternal diſgrace to it, will ſtigmatize our national character with the charge of foul ingratitude; if you have read the intereſting hiſtory of the Pelew Iſlands, you will join with me, I am ſure, in lamenting this ſtain to Britiſh glory, exemplified in the neglect of ſending intelligence of his ſon's fate to the monarch of thoſe iſlands; but though

my

my *patriotiſm* (I hope *that ſentiment* is not unfeminine) is wounded, my concern for the anxiety, ſuſpenſe, and ſorrow of that amiable and unhappy Prince is mitigated by the conſideration, that had we ſent over intelligence, the meſſengers, being of a different character probably from thoſe who were ſo hoſpitably entertained and kindly aſſiſted by the inhabitants of Pelew, might have corrupted the virtuous principles of the innocent iſlanders, and have introduced vices among them deſtructive of their principles and their virtue. I thought I could not have written a grave ſentence; I certainly was not *en train* for it when I began my letter; but the intereſt I take in the honour of my country, makes me ſeriouſly regret whatever tends to tarniſh its glory, hence gravity was induced. Adieu once more.

The Marquis DE BEAUMONT *to Sir* HENRY MOUBRAY.

Paris.

YOUR charming Couſin, to whom I have obligations too extenſive to be enumerated, has informed me of an engagement ſhe has made for me, to relate the particulars of our meeting with the lovely Julia, and to give an account of the reform of her ſiſter; ſhe ſays, you will be ſolicitous to hear every circumſtance, and as it will ſerve to divert your thoughts from the contemplation of diſquieting ſubjects, wiſhes it were not delayed. My own inclination ſtrongly prompts me to comply with her requeſt; you have ſhared in my ſufferings and ſorrows, and will, I am ſure, take a part in my happineſs. It will be a ſenſible pleaſure to me if I contribute, by any means, to alleviate your uneaſineſs. I cannot help thinking, from ſome obſervations I have made,

that

that however unpromiſing your proſpects, ſome good awaits you. Madame de Lauſan, when I was lamenting your diſtreſs of mind, ſaid, ſhe hoped it would not laſt long, you might be happier ſooner than you expected. This ſeemed to imply a knowledge of more than was confeſſed; anxious for you I haſtily inquired: ſhe ſaid, ſhe only judged from obſerving, misfortunes were more felt in apprehenſion than when inflicted, and therefore, when you found the ſtroke you dreaded inevitable, your good ſenſe and fortitude would furniſh you with powers to ſuſtain it. I doubted the ſincerity of this reply, more from the voice and manner in which it was delivered, than the nature of the argument it contained; beſides, her uncommon ſpirits lead me to believe ſhe does not think your grief of a permanent nature; if ſhe did, I am perſuaded it would excite her ſympathy more powerfully; for, as ſhe has fully proved, her excellent heart enters

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deeply into the feelings of thoſe ſhe regards, and you are, as ſhe ſometimes ſays, a paragon of male perfection in her eyes, almoſt at the ſummit of human excellence (but that point, ſhe laughingly obſerves, is only to be obtained by her angelic ſex) conſequently have a great intereſt in her boſom. I would not inſpire falſe hopes, my dear Moubray; but I cannot reſiſt the impulſe that engages me to encourage a favourable preſage.—Now to my hiſtory. I will begin with Mademoiſelle de St. Clair—her excellent mother went as ſoon as poſſible after her arrival to ſee her; ſhe found the dangerous part of her diſorder was removed, but of ſo violent a nature had it been, as to alter her in ſuch a manner, that only a mother's eye could have recognized her. She was blind, and almoſt ſtill inſenſible to every object. The phyſician gave ſtrict orders for her being kept quiet; Madame de St. Clair, therefore, did not make herſelf known, but reſolved to remain with her daughter

till

till ſhe was recovered: you will conceive what her feelings muſt have been on this occaſion, and I need not paint my varied and painful ſenſations on hearing this account. I could not but recollect how dear ſhe had been to me, and though every ſentiment of eſteem was eradicated, though affection had been deſtroyed by the diſcovery which ſhocked my principles, while it wounded my pride and ſenſibility, yet the tenderneſs that ever dwells in the heart for the ſufferings of thoſe once fondly cheriſhed, made pity the predominant feeling of my mind. This, and Julia's abſence, rendered me a prey to melancholy, which in vain I endeavoured to ſhake off; neither the attentions of my friends, nor the amuſements they obliged me to partake, could diſſipate my concern. Mademoiſelle de St. Clair's recovery diminiſhed ſome part of the cauſe; ſhe had gradually improved from the time of her mother's arrival, whoſe tender care and judicious manage-

ment promoted that event. When it was deemed ſafe to acquaint her with the circumſtance of Madame de St. Clair's preſence, the intelligence was gradually unfolded; it affected her greatly, ſhe ſhed torrents of tears, and pathetically lamented her unworthineſs of ſuch a parent, imploring, in terms expreſſive of the deepeſt remorſe, her ſorrow for her miſconduct. Madame de St. Clair entreated her to pacify herſelf, for agitation would endanger a relapſe: ſhe had no doubt her future conduct would atone for the paſt, and a ſincere repentance would enſure her the pardon of her Creator, and of every good mind ſhe had injured. Mademoiſelle replied, that for her kind mother's ſake ſhe would endeavour to ſubdue feelings which might retard her recovery, as a relapſe, or the protraction of her illneſs would ſo greatly aggravate a parent's ſufferings, who had already endured ſuch bitter affliction on her account, therefore ſhe reſolved not to renew

new any affecting ſubjects till her ſtrength enabled her to purſue them without a riſk. Madame de St. Clair embraced her, thanked her for her conſideration, and recommended to her, if poſſible, to avoid dwelling on painful ſubjects; to prevent it, this excellent mother read to her, ſelecting ſuch books as would tend to promote the completion of that reform ſhe hoped was indicated, ſuch as recommended the paths of rectitude, encouraged the ſuggeſtions of virtue, and marked the conſtant attendance of miſery on vice; which proved that peace was the reſult of repentance, and genuine contrition the means of reſtoring us to Divine favour, of beſtowing that ſweet tranquillity poſſeſſed by thoſe who ſedulouſly endeavour to perform their duty to God and man. Often while reading to her did Madame de St. Clair hear deep ſighs iſſue from her heart, and obſerve floods of tears guſh down her cheeks; then would ſhe ſoothe, conſole,

and encourage her, by turning to ſome paſſages calculated to excite her hopes if her repentance was ſincere. Thus, by her maternal attention, did ſhe accelerate the cure of her daughter's diſtemper, and promote the reformation of her principles. Within a week after her arrival, Mademoiſelle was able to ſit up; ſhe took that occaſion to beg her mother would allow her now to renew the ſubject of paſt events, for that it preſſed ſo heavily on her mind, ſhe could not reſt till ſhe had expreſſed her full ſenſe of her crimes, and endeavoured to prove the ſincerity of her repentance: it would relieve her to do it, and ſhe ſhould then apply herſelf with more fortitude to endeavour at obtaining the pardon of her Creator. Madame de St. Clair judging that it would be adviſeable to attend to her now, ſaid, if ſhe was equal to ſuch a converſation, her attention would await the communication. Her daughter then, after reiterating her acknowledgements for her care of ſuch an

un-

unworthy creature, proceeded to ſay, the gratitude and compunction it excited, were not the only effects her kindneſs had produced; it had led her to reflect on the difference of thoſe ties which were formed by the good and the bad, and the influence of virtue in promoting ſocial happineſs. She found that connections entered into by the unprincipled were of no longer duration than while their objects were proſperous and happy; when ſickneſs or misfortune oppreſſed, when the want of ſympathy was ſtrongly felt, the tie was diſſolved, and the wretched ſufferer left to feel all the horrors of affliction, without a being to offer the aſſiſtance or conſolation they ſo greatly needed; whereas, in good minds, the claims of friendſhip, of humanity, were ſo powerfully acknowledged, that it was in the hour of trial when the ſoothings of tenderneſs, the aid of kindneſs was moſt required, they were called forth with the greateſt energy; and not only to thoſe they

they loved did the amiable evince their ſenſibility, it was exerciſed for the relief of the unhappy of every denomination—the ſtranger, and even the criminal, were benefited by the ſweet mercy of the virtuous and the good—who ſo competent to judge the difference as herſelf?—the companion whom ſhe confided in had betrayed her, when ſhe found there was no proſpect of her promoting her intereſt, whereas one whom ſhe had diſgraced, injured, and whoſe peace of mind ſhe had ſo deeply wounded, came to aſſiſt, to ſoothe, and conſole her when under the preſſure of a dire calamity. The deep impreſſion this had made, the unſpeakable relief her tender care had afforded, the idea of the miſery ſhe muſt have felt if left to herſelf in that dreadful hour, all conſpired to prepare her mind for the admiſſion of that repentance which ſhe hoped was now completed. The books ſhe had heard, her mother's converſation, her own conſequent reflections, had produced ſuch effects on her

mind,

mind, as would lead her to evince her ſincerity of repentance. She was ſo conſcious of her not being entitled to credit, without ample proof, as to render her ſolicitous to give that proof; ſhe hoped her mother would not refuſe her acquieſcence, it was the only circumſtance that could now promote her tranquillity—her intention and wiſh was to take the veil. To be permitted to enter immediately on her noviciate was her only deſire, and ſhe hoped when her ſincerity was eſtabliſhed, all whom ſhe had injured would extend their pardon to her. Obſerving that Madame de St. Clair's utterance was ſtopped by her tears, ſhe employed every argument and effort ſhe thought calculated to compoſe and conſole her to produce that effect. When her endeavours had in ſome degree ſucceeded, Madame de St. Clair expreſſed her ſatisfaction and approbation of all her daughter had ſaid, except what related to her taking the veil—aſſured her ſhe was now reſtored

to

to as great a degree of favour as ſhe had ever poſſeſſed, and that no recollection of paſt events ſhould ever influence her to mark any alteration of conduct to her. Victoria thanked her with her tears, then ſaid, ſhe had wiſhed to ſpeak to ſome other points, but being at preſent unequal to it, would wave them till a future occaſion; in the mean time, however, ſhe added, ſhe ſhould know no reſt if her mother refuſed to comply with her requiſition of taking the veil. Madame de St. Clair begged her to pacify herſelf on this ſubject, as ſhe might depend on it ſhe would not oppoſe her entering on her noviciate, if, when recovered, ſhe continued to wiſh it; but ſhould ſhe, previous to her taking the irrevocable vow, alter her reſolution of remaining in the convent for life, ſhe would be ready to receive her, to welcome her as a child.

The Baron called on his ſiſter-in-law the evening of the day on which this converſation paſſed; ſhe related it to him,

and

and expreſſed her gratitude to heaven for the peculiar bleſſing of her child's converſion in the moſt affecting terms. We were all ſenſible to the touching effect of this communication when Monſ. de Vernieul made it—While we were obſerving on it, my mother was called out—at her return, her countenance plainly marked ſhe had received ſome pleaſing intelligence. My father challenged her with it, and deſired to participate. She owned ſhe had heard ſomething which pleaſed her, but ſhe was bound by promiſe not to inform even him yet—the whole party would be acquainted with it very ſoon, in the mean time ſhe would tell us one thing which would give us ſatisfaction, that Madame de Lauſan was ſo well recovered as to be able to receive her friends, and ſhould be glad to ſee me in particular the next day, for ſhe had ſomething to ſhew me, which her knowledge of my taſte convinced her would pleaſe me much: we all conceived there was ſome plan carrying on, and

judged

judged our lively Couſin had a ſhare in it, but of what nature we could not gueſs: as my mother was engaged not to tell, we did not aſk, but we canvaſſed the matter over, ſuppoſing ſo many things, and appealing to her, that ſhe was much amuſed by our perplexity and wild conjectures. The Baron was ſent for out juſt before ſupper, and we received a meſſage of excuſe for his not returning, ſoon after. This increaſed my curioſity; I own to you I was ſo anxious on the ſubject (believing I had ſome great intereſt in it, from my mother's often looking at me very ſignificantly, and ſmiling while we were forming our conjectures) that I got very little reſt. As ſoon as propriety permitted, *perhaps a little ſooner*, I went to call of Madame de Lauſan. I was deſired to walk into her dreſſing-room: ſhe was not there, but the ſervant ſaid ſhe would wait on me in a few minutes. I heard the ſound of a harp in the next apartment (which is a muſic-room)

ſoon

ſoon after a voice whoſe melody had a ſeraphic ſweetneſs, ſtruck on my ear. I ſtarted—my heart beat quick; I approached the door, opened it—'twas Julia—In an inſtant I was at her feet; ſhe had not expected me; her emotion marked her ſurprize, and, ſhall I hope, her ſatisfaction. Madame de Lauſan had contrived this—I ſoon learnt that to her unſpeakable kindneſs I owed not only this delightful interview, but that I was indebted to her for an acquiſition of happineſs my pen would in vain attempt to deſcribe. The lovely, the amiable Julia conſents to be mine. She has owned her affection was never ſubdued; that her ſcruples are overcome by Madame de Lauſan's arguments, and the conviction of my preference. What tranſports did this acknowledgement produce! how delightful are my proſpects—with ſuch a woman as Julia for my companion my happineſs and my virtues are enſured—her diſpoſition, her amiable qualities,

her

her underſtanding and ſenſibility, will render my home a paradiſe. Never was a proſpect of happineſs ſo complete, ſo well founded as mine: but I will not dwell on it; for, alas! dear Moubray, your feelings are not in uniſon; the raptures of a happy lover will oppreſs you. I know you will be rejoiced *that I am* happy; but to dwell on *the ſource* may naturally occaſion painful reflections. I will, therefore, relate ſome leſs affecting circumſtance.

I was about to give you an account of the Baron's ſurprize, when introduced to Julia the evening of her arrival, and our compliments to my mother on her preſerving the ſecret ſo well, when I was ſent for by the Baron. He had been deſired by Madame de St. Clair to impart a converſation ſhe had held with her elder daughter, and a requeſt ſhe had made reſpecting me. This was the ſubſtance of it..... Mademoiſelle de St. Clair had

had begged to be informed of the tranſactions which had occurred after her departure from the Chateau, and requeſted no circumſtance might be omitted to ſpare her feelings, for ſhe conſidered the ſufferings ſhe endured as a puniſhment due, a ſort of expiation for her offences; therefore ſhe entreated to have every particular. During the relation ſhe ſhed tears almoſt inceſſantly, and when it was concluded, flung herſelf at the feet of her mother, again, as ſhe ſaid, to implore forgiveneſs for the grief ſhe had occaſioned her. Madame de St. Clair raiſed, embraced, and wept over her; aſſured her, her penitence had procured a full pardon, and begged the ſubject might not be renewed in future.---Mademoiſelle replied, that ſhe was concerned to affect her ſo much, but had not yet made the atonement ſhe thought neceſſary, without which, indeed, her conſcience would not be appeaſed: never could ſhe reſt, or offer up her prayers and peni-

tence to Heaven, till ſhe had received the forgiveneſs of all whom ſhe had injured: ſhe begged to ſee her ſiſter, to humble herſelf before her, and to obtain that pardon ſhe was ſure would not be refuſed; me ſhe alſo particularly requeſted to ſee. She thought I might refuſe, from the ſuggeſtions of generoſity or commiſeration, but it would be a ſevere diſappointment to her if I refuſed. She had a reaſon, beſides thoſe which influenced her in reſpect to others, for deſiring to ſee *me*; if I wiſhed not to add to the wretchedneſs of a being ſo loſt as ſhe was, I ſhould not refuſe. Seeing her ſo earneſt to gain this point, and ſo much moved, Madame de St. Clair told her ſhe was ſure I ſhould not refuſe to comply with what ſhe conſidered eſſential to her repoſe, however it might hurt or diſtreſs me, and ſhe could anſwer for it, that her paſt errors would not only be forgiven by all, but would never more be mentioned. This ſeemed to relieve her: ſhe

ſaid,

ſaid, when theſe points were accompliſhed, ſhe ſhould endeavour to make her peace with her Creator, by devoting every hour of her future life to fulfil his commandments. She then proceeded to inform her mother of the circumſtances ſhe was unacquainted with reſpecting her: that ſhe had managed ſo as to overhear the converſation between us, when Madame de St. Clair informed me of the Baron's reſolution to give Julia an opportunity of juſtifying herſelf. Finding thence all her ſchemes would be fruſtrated, if ſhe could not find means to ſecure me before this eclairciſſement took place, ſhe, therefore, when ſhe had learnt enough to convince her of the neceſſity of taking ſome immediate ſtep, ſtept out, and flew to Madame Nivelon, to conſult her. She was denied, though Victoria knew ſhe was not gone out, as her brother's gloves and cane lay on the table; however, ſhe was not to be ſeen: therefore, ſhe haſtened back to the Caſtle,

and

and ſhutting herſelf up in her apartment, ſet herſelf to conſider what plan ſhe had better adopt. After much deliberation, ſhe reſolved on that of perſuading me to enter into a contract; that, as ſhe feared I ſhould object to any farther deceptions, ſhe had determined to pique me into it, by inſinuating a circumſtance ſhe was appriſed I ſhould catch at; the appearance my refuſal would have of being inſtigated by intereſted motives, if I expreſſed any objection to the plan; this, and the motives of affection ſhe aſcribed her conduct to, would enſure her ſucceſs, ſhe thought. She was not deceived; I had ſeen every thing in the point of view her poſition of them tended to enſure; but an unexpected event had ariſen to deſtroy every hope of ſucceſs, and informed her ſhe was betrayed. The morning her uncle had gone out ſhe ſuſpected ſomething and was reſolved to inform herſelf: his ſtay, and my not returning, increaſed her fears; ſhe watched his countenance

when

when he came back, and was ſure all was not right. By a conſiderable bribe, ſhe had got from one of the Baron's ſervants an account of where his maſter had been; ſhe then ſaw all was loſt, and judged, if ſhe did not make her eſcape, ſhe ſhould be confined; ſhe ſhould have gone to Madame Nivelon's, but ſhe was abſent on a party of pleaſure. There was only one reſource---to go to Paris. Accordingly ſhe put up all her valuables, and with the aſſiſtance of the ſame ſervant, whoſe intereſt ſhe gained, made her eſcape in the night, remaining in a cottage near the road till one of the public carriages came paſt. Happily, as ſhe thought, one came without any paſſengers; it gave her occaſion to meditate, uninterruptedly, on the plan ſhe was to purſue; ſhe had then arranged the ſcheme ſhe afterwards put in practice, hoping the frequent change of carriages, and alteration of her name, would prevent a diſcovery; but ſhe had found how vain

the art of mortals when oppoſed to the will of Providence. Her's had produced no end but to bring diſgrace and unalterable wretchedneſs on herſelf; yet miſerable and degraded as ſhe was, far happier did ſhe conſider herſelf than if ſhe had ſucceeded. None could rejoice ſo much in her failure as herſelf, ſince, for a few years of ſplendour, of apparent happineſs, ſhe muſt have forfeited all claim to mercy, have incurred that eternal puniſhment aſſigned to ſuch ſinners. She had already felt the tortures of remorſe, and knew the horror, the anguiſh of a reproaching conſcience; "*the worm* "*that never dies.*" Theſe pangs had, while they puniſhed, purified her heart; the dreadful idea of ſuch horrors becoming eternal had alarmed her; the ſenſe of her crimes then ſtruck her; ſhe viewed her conduct in its juſt light; hence her ſorrow, repentance, and deſire to atone to her injured fellow creatures, and make her peace with her merciful Creator.

Tears

Tears ſtood in the Baron's eyes as he related theſe laſt words to me. I am not aſhamed to own they guſhed from mine. He embraced me, and when the firſt emotion was ſubſided, I aſſured him, that however painful the trial, I would certainly comply with his niece's requeſt; and begged him, in the mean time, to aſſure her of my complete forgiveneſs of whatever injury ſhe had done me, and of my ſincere good wiſhes; he then left me to go to Julia. He is ſolicitous, for all our ſakes, to have this trial over, and, therefore, means to take her to the convent this morning. I own I wiſh our interview was over. I feel a great horror at the idea of meeting a woman once ſo much beloved, whoſe conduct created ſuch miſery, and excited ſuch contempt, and who is now in ſo pitiable a ſtate. The complicated and painful ſenſations her remembrance produces, always makes me ſhun it. To ſee her will be a trial. I muſt ſummon all my fortitude to ſup-

port it. Adieu, dear Moubray; you ſhall hear from me as ſoon as the dreaded meeting is over. Believe me

Your faithful friend,

CHARLES DE BEAUMONT.

The Marquis DE BEAUMONT *to Sir* HENRY MOUBRAY.

Paris.

IT was not without reaſon, my dear friend, that I dreaded the trial of meeting Victoria; my imagination had not exaggerated its effect. I went by her deſire the next morning: I was introduced into the parlour—Madame de St. Clair ſoon joined me. She came firſt, ſhe ſaid, to prepare me for the ſight of her poor daughter, who was ſo much altered that I ſhould be ſhocked at the meeting, if not apprized of what I was to ſee. She

was deſirous alſo, by this preparation, to ſave her child the pain of my ſurpriſe, if poſſible. She was concerned to obſerve my agitation, and feared it would be much augmented; but as I was come, and Victoria ſo ſolicitous to ſpeak to me, ſhe thought the ſooner the meeting was over, the better; ſhe would now go to aſſiſt her daughter, who, ſhe hoped, was recovered from the emotions ſhe had felt on knowing I was there. She went, and in leſs than a quarter of an hour I heard the ſlow movement of perſons approaching. My heart palpitated ſo violently, it ſeemed trying to force a paſſage through my breaſt. The door opened—I actually trembled; but, gracious Heaven! what were my ſenſations on beholding this once-adored and beauteous creature? In vain did I endeavour to repreſs my horror—in vain attempt to ſpeak! ſurpriſe and ſorrow deprived me of utterance and motion. She was more collected; ſhe ſpoke. Her voice rouſed

me; that well-known voice, whoſe accents were once ſo welcome to my ear. I approached her—took her hand—attempted to inquire how ſhe found herſelf; the words died on my lips. She ſaw my agitation, and pointing to a chair, ſaid, "I ſee your ſurpriſe and horror, "my Lord, and that you fear their un-"avoidable expreſſion ſhould grieve "me; but, believe me, I feel not on "that account; the alteration in my per-"ſon I conſider as too great a bleſſing to "be hurt at any effect it may produce; "for it has brought with it an alteration "of ſentiments, which will, I truſt, "through the mercy of Heaven, ſave "me from everlaſting miſery. I am "ſorry to occaſion you ſuch diſtreſs, as I "perceive this meeting gives—I have "already given you too much." The tears guſhed from her eyes; I waved my hand, to expreſs my deſire ſhe would not touch that ſubject. I could not ſpeak. She then proceeded: "I have already

"ſpeci-

"ſpecified, that I had a particular reaſon
"for wiſhing to ſpeak to you; it is this:
"I was once the object of your tendereſt
"affection, and though my conduct has
"inſpired contempt, yet I know not
"whether that feeling may have ſuffi-
"cient power to eradicate an affection ſo
"deeply engraven. I have learned that
"you propoſe to unite yourſelf to my
"amiable ſiſter. I know your heart, my
"Lord; and hence judged you would be
"led to offer yourſelf, when you found
"the intereſt you had created in her bo-
"ſom; and that your excellent princi-
"ples, and ſenſibility, would engage you
"to promote her happineſs; but yet that
"tenderneſs, which ariſes from affection,
"might be wanting. My image, in its
"former ſtate, when it won your love,
"might, in ſpite of reaſon, obtain a
"place in your remembrance, to the ex-
"cluſion of one whom you were deſi-
"rous of giving a preference to. Theſe
"conſiderations influenced me to reſolve,

"on requeſting this meeting; for as my "beauty excited your affection, I hoped "its deſtruction would tend to remove it; "that the idea of what I now am, re-"curring with the remembrance of me, "might preclude my being a bar to "your beſtowing your whole affection "where it is ſo much due." I was going to expreſs my admiration and acknowledgements, but ſhe ſtopped me, adding, "I have now only a few words "to ſay—If the ſincereſt ſorrow, the "deepeſt contrition, for what I have been "influenced by vanity and ambition to "be guilty of, can entitle me to your "pardon, my Lord, you will not with-"hold it; ſenſible to the bittereſt remorſe, "mine is, indeed, all the anguiſh of a "wounded ſpirit; but I will no longer "tax your feelings—I ſee how deeply "you are affected, and read my pardon "in the pity that your looks ſo power-"fully expreſs. Adieu, my Lord; I "now bid you a laſt adieu. When you

think

"think of me, let compaſſion ſubdue the "ſenſe of injury: when I am worthy to "approach the Throne of Grace, with any "other petition than that which ſues for "pardon and mercy, I will ſupplicate "Heaven for your happineſs and Ju-"lia's.—Oh! may it be pure as your "hearts, and permanent as your lives—"ſuch is my ardent wiſh, and ſuch ſhall "be my fervent prayer." She attempted to riſe, but her ſpirits and ſtrength were overpowered—ſhe ſunk half ſenſeleſs on her mother's boſom. Penetrated to the heart by her appearance, her ſituation, and her words, I could not conceal their effect. I took the hand of this true and noble penitent—I bathed it with my tears; aſſuring her, that ſhe had entitled herſelf to my eſteem and reſpect, by the greatneſs of mind ſhe had now diſplayed; that the reſtoration of her peace of mind would ever be the ſubject of my wiſhes; and I had no doubt of its attainment, as contrition ſo ſincere was the expiation

the Almighty had himſelf aſſured us would be accepted by him. I hoped, therefore, ſhe would be comforted; and added, I would not take a laſt leave of her; for if ſhe reſolved on remaining in the convent, I would, with her permiſſion, inquire ſometimes, among the reſt of her friends, of her health, or if I could be of any ſervice to her. (I ſaid this, my dear Moubray, as much to take off the ſolemnity and affecting ſenſations which the idea of an everlaſting adieu inſpired, ſeeing its effect on her, as to aſſure her of my ſincere reconciliation.) A faint ſmile appeared, for a moment, on her countenance. She expreſſed a very exalted ſenſe, of what ſhe termed my generoſity, and thanked me, with much energy, for the comfort my kindneſs and conſolatory expreſſions had infuſed into her heart---ſuch had been Julia's conduct, ſuch her argument, while tears of compaſſion, ſhe was ſo unworthy of, had been ſhed on her boſom by that noble-

minded,

minded, that excellent creature. She ſaw that our's were indeed kindred minds; happineſs, therefore, as perfect as was permitted on earth, ſhe was ſure would be our's.—Madame de St. Clair fearing ſhe would be exhauſted if ſhe converſed any more, adviſed her retiring. I then repeated, in faultering accents I confeſs, my wiſhes for her welfare, and haſtily withdrew. On my arrival at home, I retired to my own apartment, to recover from my agitation, which was, as you will imagine, very great—long was it ere I could regain my compoſure, or ſeparate the maſs of confuſed ideas, and ſenſations, this affecting interview occaſioned. The voice of Victoria vibrated on my ear; too long had its accents conveyed delight to my ſoul, to admit of my hearing it without reviving the emotions I had felt; but the recollection of the anguiſh I had ſuffered, and the miſery into which I had plunged one of the loveliеſt and moſt amiable of women, from the

affection, which memory now retraced, the idea of never having been loved by her for whom I had felt ſo ardent a paſſion, deſtroyed the tenderneſs excited by the ſounds of thoſe accents which my heart greeted by ſuch emotions; and the ſort of pity ſhe excited was calculated to aſſiſt the conqueſt of all remaining paſſions; it was not the ſoft commiſeration inſpired by misfortune, it was the compaſſion which is yielded to ſuffering guilt, as ſuch was tinctured with a ſenſation humiliating to its object, and conſequently deſtructive to that affection which permits us not to aſſociate any thing condeſcending with its impulſes.

The alteration in Victoria's perſon, though it greatly ſhocked me at firſt, would not, I am convinced, have produced any effect inimical to her influence, had ſhe never loſt my eſteem; for though beauty may inſpire affection, paſſion, at leaſt, when that is deeply rooted, no change that ariſes in the form then affects

us: but, as my affection had received ſuch a ſhock, and was founded in the paſſion beauty excites, I thought of the alteration with the ſenſations ſhe nobly intended it ſhould inſpire. From the contemplation of this heroic act (for ſuch all who know the human heart, how tenacious it is on the points which engage the admiration and attention of the world, will allow it to be) I was led to reflect on the connection of our virtues and vices; hardly is there an amiable attribute of our nature but what has its attendant error or weakneſs—thoſe tares among the wheat, which only good ſenſe and religion can prevent from operating to the diſgrace of our conduct and the deſtruction of our happineſs and fame. *Generoſity*, I have obſerved, is generally attended by a thoughtleſs profuſion injurious to *the poſſeſſor*, and ruinous to many in connection with, and dependent on him. *Goodnature* is frequently accompanied by a weakneſs of reſolution that renders

ders it as liable to impoſition, frailty, and contempt, as productive of what is amiable and praiſe-worthy. Ambition too often dwells with greatneſs of mind; in fine, all partake of human imperfection. In the character which excited this obſervation, I trace the good and evil produced by theſe aſſociations: at leaſt it appears to me, that the act in queſtion originated from a native elevation of mind, as ambition inſpired the meaſures employed to obtain its object, diſtinction, and precedence. Hence it is that characters are ſo differently repreſented in the world; were we to ſelect only what is amiable and virtuous in the conduct of any individual, how ineſtimable, how reſpectable, would he appear; whereas, if you exhibited the failings and errors only, the ſame man would probably excite contempt and diſlike. We ought, therefore, to be cautious in judging, and particularly in *deciding on* characters, of believing one perſon incapable of good, becauſe they

have

have committed ſome evil, or that another is intitled to univerſal adoration, becauſe they poſſeſs ſome conſpicuous excellence. How many from their knowledge of one part of Mademoiſelle de St. Clair's conduct would have deemed her incapable of acting ſo nobly; but did they examine human nature, they would find it not ſo extraordinary as they imagine. Ambition and vanity had overpowered the ſocial part of her leading principle, but had not deſtroyed it; when repentance introduced virtue, its influence was revived. To return to my narrative; when my mind began to reſume its ſerenity, and was able to diſcriminate its ſenſations and ideas, I found that though Mademoiſelle de St. Clair had renewed ſome of thoſe feelings for a while which had formerly given her an empire over my heart, yet that their duration was ſhort, and probably were excited as much from the nature of the ſcene, and its attendant circumſtances, as from the

remains

remains of her influence: that the ideas which now inſeparably connected themſelves with her image, tended effectually to preclude the renewal of my affection for her. This inveſtigation having ſatisfied me, I welcomed the return of Julia to my memory; as I contemplated her character, the impreſſion it made induced that ſweet ſenſation of peace which convinced me of the nature of an influence like her's, how productive of happineſs to all in connection with her. Occupied with theſe reflections, I was loſt in the pleaſing contemplation of promiſed felicity, when I heard a rap at my door; I opened it, and was aſtoniſhed to ſee my young friend Louis with his uncle, who ſaid he was reſolved to have *a little ſurpriſe of his own* as well as the reſt, and as he owed his nephew a kindneſs for his noble behaviour, had reſolved to treat him with a journey to Paris, and what would be more agreeable to him, a re-union with his family. I was

pleaſed

pleaſed to ſee this amiable young man, who had obtained a very great ſhare of my eſteem, and delighted to think his uncle had marked his approbation in ſo handſome a manner: after ſome general converſation I gave the Baron to underſtand, that I wiſhed for a few minutes private communication with him; he therefore ſent Louis on a meſſage for him. I then acquainted him with the ſcene that had paſſed at the convent, my ſenſations and conſequent reflections; told him, that had I found from the inveſtigation of my ſentiments any that threatened to interfere with Julia's happineſs, I ſhould have conſidered it a duty to inform him, and to have requeſted a ſuſpenſion of our union till I could conquer every ſenſation that precluded my giving her an undivided heart. As I was now ſure that my affection for her was of a nature to influence my conſidering her happineſs my firſt object, and her preference the moſt deſireable attainment on earth,

I was

I was ſolicitous that our union ſhould take place as ſoon as the requiſite preparations could be made. The Baron was very laviſh in his encomiums on my candour, and ſaid that he was perfectly ſatisfied that his niece and myſelf would poſſeſs as complete a ſtate of felicity as had ever been the lot of mortality; her qualities were ſuch as would endear her to me the more her character was known, and my diſpoſition would enſure the permanency of her affection; he ſhould make it his buſineſs to accelerate an event which was ſo much wiſhed by all parties, as the propoſed alliance; his reconciliation to his family had occaſioned the only pleaſurable ſenſation in conſidering his large acquiſition of fortune, which that circumſtance had ever produced. He now taſted the exquiſite delight of making others happy; his ſiſter-in-law would no longer feel the reſtraints impoſed by a confined income, or the anxiety of not having it in her power to make a

proviſion for her children; his nephew would have an ample fortune to ſuſtain the family dignity, and his Julia ſhould be the peculiar object of his care in this point. As no impediments were now to be apprehended, he hoped a few weeks would give his beloved niece the huſband whom, of all the men in the world, he ſhould prefer for her. I would have made the acknowledgements due on ſuch an occaſion, but taking my arm, he hurried me away, ſaying, he had promiſed the charming little Counteſs (your Couſin) to preſent his nephew, and he knew I ſhould not be averſe to have an opportunity of entertaining Julia—we would, therefore, take Louis and go to the Count de Laufan's. I know not whether I mentioned that Julia and her Couſin remained, at the earneſt requeſt of Madame de Laufan, with her. When we joined the party there, I obſerved that the penetrating eye of Julia regarded me with an appearance of anxiety I traced

the

the ſource of; ſhe knew I had been at the convent; ſolicitous to remove every doubt from her gentle mind, I addreſſed her with more than uſual tenderneſs, and turning the converſation to a cheerful theme, diſſipated her concern on the ſubject which had created it. I afterwards took occaſion, when we were alone, to relate the particulars of the interview, ſuppreſſing only thoſe circumſtances reſpecting my tranſient impreſſions which would have alarmed her unneceſſarily. The tears which ſtreamed from her lovely eyes marked her ſympathy in her ſiſter's ſufferings. She thanked me with indeſcribable ſweetneſs for my kindneſs to the unhappy Victoria, aſſuring me that the higheſt proof I could give of my regard and eſteem for her would be to aſſiſt her in offering every alleviation and conſolation to the afflicted penitent, her ſituation admitted of: charmed with this amiable goodneſs, I told her ſhe ſhould in all things direct my conduct; thoſe ſhe

loved

loved ſhould be higheſt in my favour, and whom ſhe pitied or intereſted herſelf for, would be ſure of my ſympathy and beſt offices. We then ſpoke of Louis; her ſurprize and pleaſure at ſeeing him, his ſorrow for his neglect of her, owing to the miſrepreſentations ſhe laboured under, and the faſcination of Madame Nivelon, whoſe influence was ſo unbounded, that it over-ruled almoſt every conſideration. Satisfied by my behaviour that ſhe had nothing to apprehend from my viſit to Victoria, Julia was more tranquil than I had ever ſeen her; I availed myſelf of the obſervation to engage her to conſent that our union might not be delayed longer than the neceſſary preparations required: above affectation, ſhe ſaid, whenever her friends deemed it right, ſhe ſhould not refuſe, or wiſh to delay an event which ſhe had concurred in, when aſſured my happineſs was intereſted in it. There is a degree of ingenuouſneſs in the character of this lovely

woman, which, aſſociated as it is with unaffected delicacy, engages my ſtrongeſt admiration. You, dear Moubray, will be among the number of thoſe who will diſtinguiſh her with peculiar eſteem, as ſhe poſſeſſes every attribute you have ſo frequently, and I now feel, ſo juſtly, deſcribed as moſt amiable and engaging in a female character. You will, perhaps, ſoon judge for yourſelf, but I am not afraid that you will accuſe me of exaggeration; you will find I have not reached the excellence of this charming woman in my deſcription. I muſt now bid you adieu. I do not aſk your congratulations, for I am aſſured your heart participates in the felicity which poſſeſſes that of,

Dear Moubray,

Your faithful and affectionate,

CHARLES DE BEAUMONT.

P. S. You are at liberty to confide all I have written to the ladies of your family.

To

To Sir HENRY MOUBRAY.

Cavendiſh-ſquare.

I ANTICIPATE your aſtoniſhment, Sir Henry, in having a packet given to you penned apparently by Elwina Melcombe, a reſident in the ſame houſe, and ſuppoſed to be on the point of marriage with another. I trace the attendant ſenſations which ariſe from this ſtrange appearance, and think I am not miſtaken in believing ſatisfaction will have ſome ſhare in them; but this ſurpriſe is only a preparative for one which will affect you more forcibly. Though the characters of this letter are thoſe you have regarded as diſtinguiſhing the writing of Elwina Melcombe, they are traced by the pen of —— Auguſta Mortimer. The criſis is now arrived, when I am permitted to avow myſelf, to acquaint you, wherefore I have aſſumed the name and ſtation of another, whence I have ſo long deceived and contributed

tributed to make you unhappy. When I learnt the clauſe of your uncle's will, a feeling ſomewhat congenial to your's aſſailed my mind—the condition annexed to the inheritance of ſo conſiderable a part of my property hurt me extremely: to marry a man who might not poſſeſs one opinion, ſentiment, or feeling, in uniſon with mine, merely to ſecure a fortune, which to me was an inferior object, appeared ſo abſurd, that I reſolved I would not heſitate to yield the overplus of my fortune, if I found the character of Sir Henry Moubray not of a deſcription calculated to make me happy; but as I wiſhed reaſon and not perverſeneſs to determine this, I reſolved to inform myſelf perfectly on the ſubject before I decided. In conſequence, I firſt made a general inquiry through my friends, report was very favourable to you; that, however, was, of courſe, not ſufficient for one who thought as I did on the ſubject of domeſtic happineſs. I had read that recommendation

mendation of Dr. Gregory's, with an attention ſo important a ſubject demanded, and reſolved it ſhould influence me in my conduct. "Before your affections are "engaged," ſays this amiable writer to his daughter, "to any man, examine "your tempers, your taſtes, and your "hearts very ſeverely, and ſettle in your "own minds, what are the requiſites to "your happineſs in a married ſtate; and "as it is almoſt impoſſible you ſhould "get every thing you wiſh, come to a "determination what you are to conſider "as eſſential, and what may be ſacri-"ficed." The inveſtigation informed me, that a domeſtic life was adapted to my nature, and conſequently, if I married, the qualities of my huſband, and the ſimilarity of our ſentiments was a point chiefly to be conſidered; I found that good principles, moral and religious—ſenſe, delicacy, ſenſibility, and good-nature, were eſſential; rank, fortune, a brilliant genius, and fine talents, I could

relinquiſh without regret. The innumerable unhappy couples I heard of, ſtrengthened my reſolution to be extremely guarded in my choice; and if I did not meet the character I thought calculated to make me happy, to remain unmarried. The difficulty was how to make the diſcovery of character ſo eſſential, ſince affection, or intereſt, would induce your ſex to aſſume any appearance beſt calculated to obtain their wiſhes. An expedient ſuggeſted itſelf, in which, I own, pique had ſome ſhare. Lady Moubray hinted to me in a letter, which announced your being at Paris, (and her intention to requeſt you would call) that you would probably be ſo hurt at the condition impoſed, as to influence your viewing me with the eye of prejudice. The idea of being ſuſpected of an intereſted view, in addreſſing me, would perhaps engage you to decline a compliance with the expreſſed condition, and the conſideration of having a wife impoſed,

poſed, though ſhe were all the heart of man could deſire, would inliſt oppoſition into the cauſe. Though pleaſed with the proof this brought of your liberality and independent principles, I was a little hurt that you ſhould ſeem determined to diſlike me; I thence adopted the idea of ſubſtituting one of my companions to receive you, and inſtructed her for the purpoſe. She performed her part ſo admirably, that I perceived the diſlike, you came prepared to beſtow, was not diminiſhed. Placed behind the grate of the convent, I could diſtinguiſh every word, and obſerve every look, without being ſeen by you: reſolved to confirm your prejudice, I occaſioned the letter to be written, which completed your diſlike of Lady Auguſta Mortimer. —Having gained ſo much of my point, I ſet out for England, and proceeded, as ſoon as poſſible, to the neighbourhood of Moubray Caſtle; ſent privately to Lady Moubray, to appriſe her of my arrival,

I omitted to mention to you, that I had prepared her Ladyſhip for the ſteps I ſhould take, and informed her of my intention to come and requeſt her advice and aſſiſtance in the proſecution of my plan. When we met, I diſcloſed all my ſentiments and deſigns to her: they met her ſtrongeſt approbation. She declared herſelf ſo much delighted with my ſentiments, that, though ſhe ſhould be influenced, by her affection for her ſon, to wiſh moſt anxiouſly that he might be deemed worthy my preference, yet, if ſhe was not ſatisfied perfectly of his feeling thoſe ſentiments which would contribute to my happineſs, and poſſeſſing the qualities I required, no conſideration ſhould tempt her to encourage an union between us. We then deviſed the ſcheme of my aſſuming the name of Elwina Melcombe, whom Lady Moubray had juſt placed in a convent at Boulogne. Your amiable Couſin, Clara, aſſiſted us much in the execution of our project; her deſcription

ſcription of your character prepoſſeſſed me greatly in your favour, and you, I found, were prepared to be pleaſed with me. Your excellent mother uſed to laugh ſometimes, and ſay ſhe had inſured your affection for me, by deſiring you not to be in love with me; contradiction was ſo natural to the heart of man, ſhe was ſure of her effect when ſhe employed that engine. The opportunities I had, from being an inmate of the ſame houſe, of examining your character, convinced me that I had the ſingular good fortune to find in the man whom my friends deſigned for me, him, whoſe diſpoſition, manners, and ſentiments, were, of all others, the moſt calculated to make me happy. I found our taſtes and opinions were perfectly congenial; every circumſtance that occurred, every book we read, produced exactly the ſame effect on both. Your approbation of all I ſaid was ſtrongly marked, though ſeldom expreſſed in language; and every opinion, every act

of your's, engaged my eſteem. Convinced that you were poſſeſſed of thoſe characteriſtics I required, I became ſolicitous to obtain a preference in your regard. Obſervation, and the opinion of Lady Moubray and your Couſin, flattered me that I had very ſoon created an intereſt in your heart; but I was afraid of being miſled by the ſuggeſtions of vanity, or the partiality of friendſhip. I may now confeſs, that there were moments, in which my doubts on this head became painful. I found that your preference of another would have given a deep wound to my peace of mind. On one occaſion this ſenſation aroſe to a very diſtreſſing height; my feelings were indeed ſeverely tried. You may, perhaps, recollect the mention of your deſign to accompany Monſieur and Madame de Lauſan to France: I judged thence, that I had deceived myſelf in the idea of having inſpired you with an affection, that had promiſed to inſure our happi-

neſs

neſs—ſaw my ſchemes fruſtrated, and my influence inſufficient to detain you in your native land. My ſenſibility, delicacy, and pride, were greatly ſhocked at this ſuppoſition: it coſt me many bitter tears. Fearing, however, as I thought I had obſerved my confuſion when I quitted the room was viſible to you, that you would impute my abſence to a cauſe productive of aggravation of pain to me, I reſolved to ſuppreſs my ſenſations, and aſſume a ſerene air, to be empowered to return as ſoon as poſſible. The anxious look you caſt on me, at my return, relieved me, in ſome degree; but as it might proceed from ſenſibility, I did not ſuffer it to obtain much influence. Lady Moubray penetrated my ſentiments; from the expreſſion ſhe employed to ſoothe me, I imagined you might have ſaid ſomething to her on the ſubject during my abſence; but when we were alone, I found ſhe formed her judgement of your ſentiments from the general tenor of your conduct

only. Your amiable Couſin reſolved to penetrate your ſentiments, by entering into a correſpondence with you. Your attention and kindneſs, in going part of the way with her, to alleviate her ſorrow at ſuch a ſeparation as her's, (from her native land, and every connection) gave her an occaſion of addreſſing you; her expectation and deſigns were anſwered; you acknowledged what ſhe had always aſſured me were your ſentiments: ſhe ſent us extracts of your letters—they removed my doubts, and convinced me a ſenſe of rectitude alone precluded your avowing the affection you ſo ardently felt. Lady Moubray was delighted beyond expreſſion at the proof of your regard to duty, and at the ſucceſs of our plan; but ſhe wiſhed to fix your ſentiments beyond the power of revocation, ere ſhe diſcovered to you who I was. She ſaid, young minds, though ſuſceptible of ſtrong impreſſions, ſeldom retained them; and, amiable as I was, if no obſta-

cles

cles to our union aroſe, ere it became practicable in your opinion, your affection might loſe that energy, which ſhe wiſhed it to have; ſhe was deſirous alſo of engaging you to form yourſelf to what would promote our felicity: that your anxiety, as a lover, to become what would moſt effectually recommend you to me, would influence your cultivating every amiable property: ſhe was anxious you ſhould *deſerve*, ere you *obtained* me; and partial as ſhe was to you, ſhe thought you (or any other man indeed) could never perfectly merit ſuch a woman, as, ſhe was pleaſed to ſay, ſhe thought me. The happineſs prepared for you was ſuch, as would amply recompenſe your preſent trials, and they would, in fact, heighten it: ſhe was, therefore, reſolved to keep the ſecret from you, till you gave the ampleſt proof of your affection being ſo confirmed, that no circumſtance ſhould have power to diminiſh it. She begged I would not counteract this deſign, as ſhe was ſure it

eſtabliſh our mutual felicity. I promiſed to be guided entirely by her.—Your lively Couſin alarmed us much by a paſſage in one of her letters to you. You will, perhaps, recollect her extravagant (I muſt call it) eulogium on *Lady Auguſta Mortimer*, my bluſhes, and your mother's aſtoniſhment, till you came to that part where ſhe ſays, "Badinage "apart, I think exactly of her Ladyſhip "as you do." This equivoque reſtored our compoſure, and excited a ſmile from its ingenious turn. If you have the letter by you, you will find how artfully ſhe managed that whole paſſage, to produce the effect of ſurpriſing and diverting us, while it cheered and deceived you. Another circumſtance, which excited your curioſity and ſurpriſe, will now be explained to you—my pleading to Lady Moubray in your behalf. You opened the door of her apartments as I mentioned your name, and finding we were engaged in private converſation, retired

almoſt

almoſt immediately. Your conduct, and Madame de Lauſan's communications, informed me of your extreme wretchedneſs on my account, particularly ſince Lord Deſborough had been repreſented as your rival—a teſt Lady Moubray reſolved to put your love and duty to. I was too much intereſted in your feelings, not to ſympathize moſt ſincerely in your ſufferings: hence I begged Lady Moubray to relieve them; but, though ſhe pitied you, ſhe was inexorable. She ſaid, ſmiling, men's hearts were ſeldom broke by love; that to taſte of ſorrow was very beneficial: ſhe would not, therefore, deprive you of a ſalutary medicine. In fact, ſhe had reſolved you ſhould not know your happineſs till the cup was at your lip, and then you would enjoy it in its moſt exquiſite degree; and entreated me ſo earneſtly not to oppoſe her, that I could not refuſe, though my heart bled for you. At the time of your friend's dangerous illneſs, when you intended to

go over to Bruxelles, I had prevailed on Lady Moubray to divulge a circumſtance, which would beſtow ſome of that conſolation you ſo greatly needed. That you ſhould go abroad, on ſuch a melancholy occaſion, with a heart already overwhelmed with grief, was an inſupportable thought. Lady Moubray's ſentiments were ſo congenial to mine, that ſhe promiſed to apprize you of what, ſhe ſaid, would give you ſpirits to encounter any trial, previous to your departure. She informed you, on the day preceding that which you appointed for ſetting out, of her deſire to have ſome particular converſation with you in the evening; but the packets arriving, induced a change in her reſolution. Your ſympathy in your friend's ſufferings for a while, I remarked, with the higheſt approbation, abſorbed all ſenſe of your own; but when health and peace were reſtored to him, your own affliction again poſſeſſed you. Often, when I have witneſſed the an-

guiſh of your mind, the tears have been with difficulty ſuppreſſed; and there were times, when I greatly feared your health would be injured by your ſufferings. At the time Lady Moubray deſired you to accompany us to ſee the houſe, I was ſo affected by my obſervation of your ſufferings, that, had you not retired, I muſt have betrayed myſelf. I then urged Lady Moubray to allow me to reveal the ſecret to you, as there could no longer be any doubt of your ſentiments, and your mind was ſo much hurt as to endanger your health. She promiſed me, after a little farther trial, ſhe would allow me to avow myſelf; but, as ſhe was pleaſed to ſay, that only the fulleſt proof of your virtues could entitle you to aſpire to me, ſhe was determined to put your fortitude and filial affection to the utmoſt teſt. If you paſſed the ordeal, without deviating in the leaſt from that line, propriety, honour, and duty preſcribed, ſhe ſhould think you worthy of me, (if

any

any body could be ſo) and the reward, ſhe was ſure, would be deemed a rich recompence for your ſufferings. I attempted to perſuade her to yield ſomething more to relieve your anxiety, as her reſolution was formed on too partial an opinion of me—but ſhe was inexorable; ſaying, as only a few weeks would now intervene ere you were made happier than ever human being was, ſhe was determined not to recede from her reſolution; every pang you ſuffered now would heighten your future felicity. I ſubmitted to her opinion, though with regret I own, as your increaſed wretchedneſs excited additional ſympathy in my boſom; and as I could not always ſuppreſs the indications of it, I apprehended that, and the apparent inconſiſtency marked alſo in my pretended acceptance of Lord Deſborough's addreſſes, would deprive me of your eſteem: to appear to merit your contempt cauſed me many uneaſy hours, though I knew that ſentiment would be

deſtroyed

deſtroyed when a diſcovery took place. Lady Moubray rallied me often on being ſo much affected by the reproachful looks you gave me; but I could not conquer the vexation they created. To be thought ill of by thoſe whom we highly eſteem, I have ever conſidered as one of the afflictions which come neareſt to the heart. I could not help ſuſpecting, however, within theſe few days, that you gueſſed at the extent of my pity, as you have obſerved my penſiveneſs with an inquiring eye. I have ſeen ſurprize mingle with your concern on regarding me; and the hint you gave of the danger of ſacrificing our happineſs by an union, where intereſt alone was the motive, confirmed me in the opinion. Lady Moubray attempted to laugh me into ſprightlineſs, but I could not conquer my ſenſe of your wretchedneſs. She promiſed me that ſhe would in a day or two relieve your mind, by a full diſcloſure of every circumſtance, and of the happineſs which awaited you; that,

that as your friend, the Marquis, was ſo ſoon to be united to his amiable Julia, ſhe thought it would be an addition to the general felicity, if both the alliances were celebrated at the ſame time. I promiſed that on this, as on every other occaſion, I would be directed by her. Her promiſe revived my cheerfulneſs, and produced a new ſurprize in you, whoſe attention was never one moment diverted from obſerving me. I gueſſed the effect of this change on you—that you would be at a loſs to account for its ſource—while the reſtleſſneſs and anxiety it produced, made it evident you attributed it to ſome motive unfavourable to your wiſhes: at length Lady Moubray informed me ſhe had brought you to the point ſhe wiſhed. You had informed her of your intention to go abroad, ſaying, that the reaſons you would give her for this determination, by ſhewing its neceſſity, would do away the objection ſhe had formerly expreſſed to it: that you then

informed

informed her of your affection for me—your reſolution to ſacrifice inclination to the claims of your family, and to your duty, your ſubſequent trials and ſufferings, the impoſſibility of ſuſtaining them longer, and, above all, of remaining in England, when my marriage was to take place; you, therefore, urged her to conſent to your leaving the kingdom, and remaining abroad, till time and abſence ſhould enable you to conquer, in ſome degree, the affection which now poſſeſſed you; to eradicate it totally would be ever out of your power. She was on the point, ſhe added, of informing you of every particular, being deeply affected by the melancholy which you diſplayed; but ſhe thought it would increaſe your ſatisfaction from the diſcovery, if it was made by me. She therefore reſtrained herſelf, and confined her anſwer to commendations of your conduct, the aſſurance of her ſympathy in your feelings, and approbation of your going abroad, inquiring,

ring, when you propoſed to ſet out: you informed her in a few days. She hoped the ſight of your friends would cheer you —that, you obſerved, melancholy had taken too deep root in your heart, to admit of any circumſtance inſpiring cheerfulneſs—happineſs and you had ſhook hands for ever. You then withdrew, ſhe ſaid, in haſte, to conceal your agitation; and ſhe came to me, to inform me her reſtrictions were now taken off—I was at liberty to inform you, as ſoon as I thought proper, of our plan. I took the earlieſt occaſion, in relief of your feelings, to give you the above particulars. It now only remains to ſay, that from having had the opportunity I wiſhed, of examining your character, and obſerving your conduct, I am convinced you poſſeſs the ſentiments, feelings, and principles I require—that our opinions and taſtes have the ſame bias, and our hearts and minds are in perfect uniſon—hence, I truſt, that happineſs, as complete and

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permanent as rational beings can enjoy, will be our portion; we ſhall find it in ourſelves; we ſhall find it in the deſire to make every fellow creature happy whom it may be in our power to aſſiſt, to ſerve, or to protect. Adieu; I truſt the tenor of my future conduct will repay you for the anxiety occaſioned by the paſt. Believe me,

With the utmoſt eſteem,

Sincerely your's,

AUGUSTA MORTIMER.

Sir HENRY MOUBRAY *to the Marquis* DE BEAUMONT.

Cavendiſh-ſquare.

YOUR prophecy is fulfilled, my dear friend; *I am happy*, happier than thought can conceive or language expreſs. Incapable of relating particulars, I incloſe a letter which will inform you of the cauſe of this bleſſed change from the

the deepeſt affliction to the moſt exalted happineſs. Judge my aſtoniſhment at receiving a pacquet which I ſaw was in the hand-writing of my beloved Elwina; ſcarcely could I believe my ſenſes; but this ſurprize was heightened beyond all deſcription, when I learnt that the woman I had ſo long adored with a hopeleſs paſſion, whom I had felt all the anguiſh of deſpair incident to that paſſion for, was her againſt whom I own I felt a ſtrong prejudice, becauſe I thought her impoſed on me, and my choice fettered, whom a ſpirit of independence, and the fear of being ſuſpected of mercenary motives in addreſſing, influenced me to think of with diſguſt, and inclined me to reſolve, ſecretly, I would reject. Surpriſe, on the firſt diſcovery, ſo wholly poſſeſſed me, that I held the letter in my hand half an hour without reading beyond the paſſage which announced Elwina Melcombe for Lady Auguſta Mortimer. When this ſentiment at length gave place to recollection,

lection, I perused the remainder of the letter; admiration and joy were excited by every page, and happiness so extensive possessed my whole soul when I had completed it, that I doubted of its reality. Again I looked at the letter, again I reflected, but it was long ere I could bring my mind to any degree of collection: it was not till I had compared the circumstances of the narrative, with the events which had passed, that I could persuade myself what I read was real; but when assured of the truth, convinced I had indeed reached the summit of human felicity, I flew to thank the lovely arbitress of my fate—at her feet I poured out the effusion of my love, admiration, and gratitude; my incoherence would mark those feelings which language refused to express more fully to a mind like her's than the most eloquent harangue. I need not relate the delightful converse we now held; you can judge of it, and to particularize it, is indeed impossible. Those

hours

hours alone would have compenſated for all the tortures of the preceding months; yet, exquiſite thought! they were but the commencement of a felicity pure, rational, and permanent. Lady Moubray's conduct, which you have heretofore condemned, and which, I will now own, I thought inconſiderate, is cleared up; you will perceive ſhe ſtudied my real happineſs, ſought to eſtabliſh it on the firmeſt baſis. From her general knowledge of human nature, and her particular obſervation of my diſpoſition, ſhe judged that a little contradiction, as well as independence of ſpirit, might enter into my mind to oppoſe the union pointed out, and therefore reſolved to convince me the woman choſen for me was the one whom, of all others, I ſhould prefer. She hence deviſed the plans, and protracted my ſufferings to ſecure my affection, and give an irremoveable root to the ſentiments which would enſure my future felicity. Experience, and maternal affec-

tion

tion influenced my mother; ſuperior ſenſe and virtue guided the lovely Auguſta in their plan; its ſucceſs has made me the happieſt of mankind; their participation renders it more exquiſitely delightful to me. When you conſider that I ſteal this time from the ſociety of my angelic Auguſta, you will, I am convinced, be diſpoſed to indulge me in conciſeneſs, particularly as I have to inform you we ſhall ſoon meet—what a different meeting from that I expected! Lady Moubray has propoſed our going over to France immediately after the marriage ceremony is performed to be preſent at your nuptials. My lovely Auguſta approves the propoſal—what a happy group ſhall we form! But however reluctantly I yield my time now to any object but my angelic miſtreſs, I cannot be unmindful of your claims on me, dear Beaumont. My beſt acknowledgements are due for your ample communications, and the kind motive which influenced them; they

really

really did produce the effect of drawing me from ſelf for a while, and making me loſe ſight of my own ſufferings in the contemplation of your extraordinary fate, and the intereſting events it involved. Every feeling you deſcribed as the conſequence of the tranſactions you were engaged in, excited reſponſive feelings in my boſom; I admired the Baron, pitied and reſpected Madame de St. Clair, and was charmed with the conduct of your young friend Louis; Mademoiſelle de St. Clair's ſufferings, penitence, and, as you juſtly ſtile it, heroic atonement, engaged my commiſeration and admiration, while your Julia has poſſeſſed herſelf of the moſt exalted eſteem; her amiable diſpoſition, good ſenſe, ſweetneſs, and ſenſibility, are contemplated with reſpect, admiration, and delight. As an individual ſhe would claim my reſpect; as the wife of my friend I ſhall give her a ſiſter's place in my regard—her character is the more intereſting to me, I conſider

her

her excellence with more ſatisfaction, as it will make him happy whom I eſteem as a friend, and love as a brother. Say to each of your family and friends what you know my heart dictates on this occaſion, and believe me,

Dear Beaumont,

Sincerely your's,

HENRY MOUBRAY.

I will write to Madame de Lauſan in a day or two.

Madame DE LAUSAN *to Sir* HENRY MOUBRAY.

Paris.

IT is ſaid, we women always inſiſt on having the laſt word; on the preſent occaſion I will have the firſt. I learn from the *charming* Marquis, you mean to write me on the ſubject of the diſcovery that has been made, *to inform me of what I know, that you* are the happieſt of all created be-

ings, and to pour out the raptures of a heart overflowing with felicity. It will be as unneceſſary, I hope, for me to amplify on the ſubject of the ſatisfaction I feel in your felicity, as for you to employ much eloquence in aſſuring me you have obtained the pinnacle of terreſtrial happineſs; therefore, *pleaſant* as it might be to dwell on the ſubject, as *uſeleſs*, it muſt give place to a topic that unites *uſe with ſatisfaction.* It is allowed that there is no ſubject affords us ſo much delight as our own panegyric, and as it is requiſite that the value of every individual ſhould be duly appreciated by the ſociety in which they are placed, my eulogium will include the above-mentioned points. *In juſtice to myſelf*, I muſt recommend to your conſideration the tenor of my conduct during the whole term of my acting the part of your confidant. You will find I fulfilled all my duties on the occaſion (ſave one, that of betraying you, but as it was to promote your intereſts, you will of courſe excuſe me.)

me.) I encouraged, ſoothed, and cheered you; I frequently introduced Hope to you, but you called her a deceiver; I gave you ſome powerful hints, but you diſregarded them. I began at laſt to think you were ſo much in love with Deſpair, that all attempts to ſuperſede her influence would be vain; that the *united powers* of Elwina Melcombe and Lady Auguſta Mortimer would be inſufficient to draw you from her. Had I not reaſon, when all *my arguments* failed? Allow me to remind you of all I have ſaid to counteract her influence, and to dart ſome rays of hope and truth into your boſom. To employ the language *uſually adapted* when one friend reminds another of their obligations, I muſt begin thus: *Did I not* tell you, you would be rewarded for your ſacrifice to duty, that time would produce an alteration in your ſentiments, would deprive Elwina Melcombe of the firſt place in your affection, and introduce ſome object to you, who would recom-

penſe you for her loſs? *Did I not* encourage you to believe ſomething would yet happen to promote your happineſs? this you treated with diſdain as a "*vague hope.*" *Did I not* plainly tell you, "you were "deeply intereſted reſpecting Lady Au-"guſta Mortimer?" but, lover-like, you were blind, you would not read aright—("Am I to blame?" as the letter ſays in that charming comedy of Seduction)—*Did I not* mark the expreſſion of *diſintereſtedneſs* which I gave you credit for in wiſhing her Ladyſhip happy with the man of her choice? yet even this broad hint wouldn't do, but you implicitly believed me when I ſaid, *you ſhould not yet know the enviable man whom Lady Auguſta Mortimer honoured with her hand.* *Did I not* ſay you would, at ſome future period, obtain the object of your affection with Lady Moubray's conſent? *Did I not* tell you I ſhould ſee your marriage with her Ladyſhip announced in the newſpapers, when, in conſequence of Emily

Dancy's ſeeing her convent companion at the play, ſhe was recognized for Lady Auguſta Mortimer, and you were tortured by congratulations on your happineſs, when you thought yourſelf the moſt miſerable of men? In fine, it would take reams of paper to enumerate *all my ſervices and merits* on this occaſion. But pleaſing as the theme is, I have not time to purſue it farther now. I hope I ſhall have ſaid enough to convince you of *your immenſe obligation to me*, though it was only in the power of the lovely Auguſta to forbid the banns that were publiſhed between you and Deſpair. I dare ſay, in ſpite of my ſpecious arguments, you thought in your heart I was a graceleſs girl for encouraging you to rebel againſt my good aunt's wiſhes; you will now perceive that I only employed that language to engage your confidence. Had I not poſſeſſed her authority, my ſenſe of gratitude and reſpect for her opinions would have prevented my utterance of

any ſentiment that was in oppoſition to her will. I now reſign my character of a confidant, but ſhall ever retain that of your ſincere friend, and you will now, perhaps, be more diſpoſed than heretofore, to allow me ſome credit as a propheteſs. My prognoſtics being founded on obſervation and truth, I propheſy that you and the amiable Auguſta will be the happieſt pair in the kingdom; that you will poſſeſs all which contribute to promote and ſecure felicity, mutual affection, and unbounded confidence, the bleſſings of the poor, the eſteem of your friends and relatives, and the protection of that Being who makes the virtuous, objects of his continual care. This is my belief, my hope, and my prayer.—I will now proceed to give you ſome account of our proceedings here: Preparations of the moſt ſplendid kind are making for the nuptials of the Marquis and Julia; (I may now talk of ſuch things to you) he becomes every hour more ſenſible to her merit, more tenderly attached;

ed; and there can be no doubt of her preſerving this affection, of its being perpetually increaſed, for the more obſervation is excited to examine her character, the more amiable it appears; when I tell you I think her almoſt equal to your Auguſta, I ſhall give you ſome idea of her excellence, yet there is a difference in the ſentiments they inſpire. Julia's ſufferings, her timidity, and ſoftneſs, mingle a ſort of gentle pity into our regard, that gives it, perhaps, more tenderneſs than is felt towards Lady Auguſta, whoſe ſuperior endowments, exalted merits, and, perhaps, elevated ſituation, inſpire awe, and make us ſenſible to a ſuperiority, which, though it gives additional charm to her ſweetneſs and condeſcenſion, influences us to regard her as a being of an higher order than even the beſt of us frail mortals. Lauſan always diſtinguiſhes her by the title of the angel; he never thought, he ſays, human nature could aſſemble ſuch perfection as ſhe poſſeſſes; but I

am not jealous; he thinks me *as amiable* as a mortal *need be*, and ſhould feel humiliated by the contemplation of ſuch excellence, only you can deſerve her, he ſays. Poor D'Aubigné is returned; he was extremely ſhocked at the account his aunt gave him of Victoria, whom he had tenderly loved. The Baron waited on him as ſoon as he heard of his arrival, and related all that had paſſed ſince his niece's entrance into the convent. Senſibly affected by the deſcription of his miſtreſs's ſufferings and repentance, he expreſſed the moſt genuine concern for her; ſaid, he conſidered her penitence and the atonement ſhe had made ſo complete an expiation of her paſt errors, that if he had the Baron's permiſſion and her aſſent, he would renew his addreſſes; he was convinced he had the preference in her regard, however undeſerving; and thought emptations ſo alluring had ſuperceded his influence, he thought he might regain it, and that her future conduct would be calculated to

make

make him happy; he ſhould, therefore, think it an obligation if the Baron would intereſt himſelf in the affair, and mention it to his niece. The Baron was greatly pleaſed with D'Aubigné's candour and goodneſs of heart, aſſured him he might rely on his beſt ſervices, not only on this occaſion, but every other; and engaged, if the propoſal met his niece's approbation, to make ſuch a proviſion for her as ſhould give them a more than comfortable eſtabliſhment. D'Aubigné aſſured him of his gratitude, but the conſideration of intereſt had no ſhare in his propoſal; he ſhould perhaps ſoon have an income to ſupport his wife according to their ſtation, as he ſuppoſed a retired life would be Mademoiſelle de St. Clair's choice, and it ever obtained his preference; whatever the Baron might kindly chuſe to do, he begged might be confined to a ſettlement on his niece, for he ſhould not be able to bear any ſuſpicion from illiberal minds of being actuated by

intereſted motives. Monſ. de Vernieul expreſſed his approbation of theſe ſentiments in the manner they deſerved. He was ſo much charmed with this amiable young man, that he told us he ſhould ardently wiſh an alliance with him, if he found his niece diſpoſed to favour him, and ſhe proved by the permanency of her preſent diſpoſition deſerving of him. He deſired Madame de St. Clair to mention the matter to Victoria, which ſhe did. Mademoiſelle was ſenſibly touched by the communication; ſhe ſhed many tears, ſaid it was a great conſolation to her to find ſhe was yet regarded by one worthy heart; acknowledged that D'Aubigné had indeed the preference in her regard, though it had not been powerful enough to ſubdue the influence of vanity and ambition; this noble and generous procedure of his had augmented the regard, but that very circumſtance would occaſion her rejection, ſhe could not bear to give ſo guilty a wretch as a wife to ſo

eſtimable a character. *He* would never reproach her, ſhe well knew; but *ſhe* ſhould always reproach *herſelf*, this would induce ſuch melancholy, as muſt embitter his days; and beſides, having once been led away by her intercourſe with the world, ſhe would not truſt her own ſtrength again; ſhe was now recovering ſome ſerenity from the hope that her ſincere penitence would be accepted by the God of Mercy as an expiation of her errors. This new propoſal revived ſentiments which would be a ſevere trial, but as ſhe conſidered all her inflictions as atonements, ſhe would bear them with fortitude, begging, however, the Chevalier would not, in pity to her, aggravate her ſufferings by importuning her on a ſubject which ſhe was decided in refuſing to liſten to. Don't you almoſt love this girl now, Couſin? I aſſure you I do; and as I find no plan can be accompliſhed that I don't give my aſſiſtance to—*hem-e-hem*—I muſt take a part in this. I will

go and talk to this fair penitent, will repreſent that the world will be the beſt place for her to mark her penitence in. She will daily have ſuch opportunities of doing good, as will be a better atonement, if profited of, than weeping, or even praying for ſeven hours together. She may live retired without being ſecluded, and having ſuch a companion as D'Aubigné, will be aided in her deſire to avoid the temptations of the world. One of our charming authors (Hawkeſworth) inſtils the idea of a life of practical virtue very powerfully in his Eaſtern Tale: "No "life is pleaſing to God," he ſays, "that "is not uſeful to man." This ſhall be my text, and if my eloquence don't prevail, why then I ſhall find my conceit and vanity ſomewhat diminiſhed; *therefore, as ſome benefit will ariſe from my attempt*, I will e'en purſue it. If I find the nymph's ſcruples giving way, I will call in a powerful auxiliary. D'Aubigné ſhall plead his own cauſe, and then I ſhall conclude

l'affaire

l'affaire eſt finis. Madame de St. Clair recovers her cheerfulneſs hourly. The Duke and Ducheſs are more delighted at every interview with their daughter-elect. In ſhort, happineſs now dwells in every boſom, mine is complete. Bleſſed myſelf in a huſband, whoſe character includes every attribute calculated to promote my felicity; my own happineſs is augmented by viewing all in whoſe fate I am concerned as bleſt as myſelf. Indeed I ſhould hardly feel my own felicity if my friends were not happy: as their fate engages my ſympathy, their ſentiments form a principal part of my comfort. To know I am beloved by ſo many eſtimable characters, is a ſource of ſuch heartfelt ſatisfaction, that the reflection fills my ſoul with the ſweeteſt ſenſations. Rouſſeau ſays, "happineſs oftener produces tears "than laughter;" *thoſe delicious tears* I have often ſhed, and they now fill my eyes. I muſt quit this path, or I ſhall be unable to come to a concluſion.—My mind

mind is too high wrought for common topics; I will conclude by and bye.

When I had finiſhed my laſt ſentence, I went in purſuit of my fair gueſts; the Marquis had ſtolen them away for a few hours as I was engaged. Finding myſelf in a *romantic* humour (ſenſibility, you know, is ſtiled romance, in the polite world, and religion honoured with the epithets of methodiſm or fanaticiſm) I thought it a proper mood for executing my deſign reſpecting Victoria; I therefore ordered the carriage, and ſet out inſtantly for the convent. *I muſt do myſelf the juſtice to ſay*, I have a happy faculty of making ſtrangers eaſy with me, if I like them, in a few minutes. I employed this to ſo much advantage with Mademoiſelle de St. Clair, that delicately as we were circumſtanced, I engaged her confidence preſently. Though the ſmall-pox has deſtroyed every veſtige of beauty in her countenance, her perſon is ſtill graceful and majeſtic, her manners too are elegant,

gant, and her ſituation makes her intereſting. I was pleaſed with her, and wiſhed to ſee her more happy. I employed the arguments I have ſpecified, with many others intended to affect her; ſhe ſeemed ſtruck with them, and the gratitude ſhe felt, ſhe ſaid, for my condeſcenſion and kindneſs, added an almoſt irreſiſtible power to my arguments, ſhe begged time to conſider the matter with the attention it required. This I highly approved. Before we parted I had the ſatisfaction to perceive my viſit had conſoled and cheered her. I have little doubt but ſhe will be induced to liſten to D'Aubigné, the more ſo, as he wiſhes the retirement ſhe is ſo ſolicitous for, and the reverſion he expects will favour their wiſh, for it is at a remote and retired part of the kingdom. Now obſerve me, if this ſucceeds, I vow I will have *all the merit of it*, ſo don't pretend to give Cupid any ſhare of my triumph. I clearly perceive that it is with the paſſion of vanity, as with

that of avarice, it increaſes by feeding. I find my conceit augment ſo much by the incenſe offered at my ſhrine, as to make me fear loſing any ſhare of my glory. *A propos*, I deſire you will honor the draft my vanity ſends you in acknowledging the *exquiſite judgement diſplayed* in my aſſigning a Prince Gallitzin to Lady Auguſta Mortimer for a huſband, when I impoſed that pretty fib on you; for, if you *had* given yourſelf the trouble to inquire, the innumerable tribe of that name would have defeated your diſcovering us till we were prepared; but I am afraid you will detect me in a forgery if I draw on you on this account, as it was in fact Lady Auguſta's idea; and as forced compliments are an ungrateful offering from ingenuous natures, I will, in my great generoſity, excuſe your ſaying the many fine things you may ſuppoſe from my *fanfarronnade* I expect. To own the truth, I know you would take occaſion to ſay ſome civil things which I wiſh to prevent. I

have

have no merit in trying to promote the happineſs of others, ſince my own depends on it. The ſervices it has been in my power to do them have been repaid tenfold, by engaging their eſteem and friendſhip. I muſt now complete my long epiſtle, with the aſſurance of participating moſt truly in your felicity, and that of all ſo dear to us. I will write as ſoon as poſſible to my revered aunt and Lady Auguſta. Offer my reſpects and affectionate remembrance to them, and believe me,

Dear Sir Henry,

Your ſincere friend,

And humble ſervant,

CLARA DE LAUSAN.

Sir HENRY MOUBRAY *to the Counteſs* DE LAUSAN.

Cavendiſh-Square.

I WILL not ſay *fine things* to you, my amiable Couſin; I need not employ the language of compliment, in expreſſing my ſenſe of your merits—your conduct will juſtify every eulogium; but to give you my full opinion of it would diſtreſs you. Knowing the delicacy of your mind ſo well as I do, I readily traced your motive for laying claim, in your lively way, to ſo much merit. I will not defeat your intention; but I cannot reſtrain my acknowledgements for the intereſt you have taken in my happineſs, and the means you employed to promote it. As it is moſt certain that we are always rewarded tenfold for the ſervices we do to others, at ſome period of our lives, ample will be your ſtore of felicity, my

dear

dear Clara, who have ſo ſedulouſly ſought, and profited of every occaſion to make others happy. That ſource which produces the completeſt ſatisfaction, will pour forth abundant ſtores for you. The eſteem, the affection of every eſtimable character *will* attend you throughout life. I ſenſibly feel, at this moment, the juſtneſs of the obſervation you quoted—that genuine happineſs ſeldom produces mirth, or high ſpirits. The world contains not a being more bleſt than I am now—my ſenſe of it is exquiſite; but thoſe who look no deeper than the ſurface, would form an incompetent idea of my feelings —they would call me grave, becauſe the tenderneſs and joy that poſſeſſes my whole ſoul are not expreſſed in my language, or diſplayed in the livelineſs thoſe evince who feel it leſs. Oh! my Couſin, you can judge its extent, when I inform you that, on Tueſday next, the divine Auguſta will be mine—four days only intervene ere my felicity will be enſured for life.

life. The marriage will be private; but my tenants, and all my poor neighbours, ſhall make it a feſtival at Moubray Caſtle. I think the beſt way of marking my gratitude to Providence, for his ineſtimable bleſſings, is to make all whom my power extends to ſhare in my felicity; not an aching heart ſhall be found in the numerous aſſembly at the Caſtle on Tueſday that I can cheer, and my amiable Auguſta will aſſiſt me in rendering their felicity as permanent as our own. We ſet out from the church to Kent, where a friend has lent me his houſe for a week, and then to proceed to Dover. We hope to arrive in Paris time enough to be preſent at the Marquis's nuptials, as they are to be celebrated in public. The preparations for mine having been got in ſuch forwardneſs, ere I was appriſed of it, has given me the ſtart of him. With what different ſenſations do I now contemplate thoſe preparations: my heart ſickened

ened heretofore, in viewing what I conſidered as appertaining to an event that was to exclude every hope of happineſs from me for ever—now I regard all with delight! the jewels ſparkle with new luſtre—the carriages mark the moſt exquiſite taſte! The houſe, which I fled as the manſion of horror, I now conſider as the temple of felicity. But for the obſtacles that have ſtood in my way, for the apprehenſions, doubts, anxiety, and deſpondency I have ſuffered, I ſhould not have felt half the felicity I now enjoy. Kindly did my excellent parent profit by her knowledge of the human heart; and as admirably did my divine Auguſta judge, in adopting the plan her good ſenſe and excellent heart dictated. All things have, indeed, "wrought together to produce "good." May my ſenſe of the great bleſſings of my fate operate in ſuch a manner as to engage my unremitted gratitude to the Author of all good; may that gratitude, which now dilates my heart,

not

not be a tranſient impulſe, but a fixed principle; diſplaying itſelf in acts of beneficence to my fellow creatures, and in performing my duty to my God. We ſhall ſoon meet, my amiable Couſin; you will, therefore, excuſe a longer letter. The kindeſt remembrances attend you from your friends here—preſent our's to your happy circle—believing me, with the utmoſt affection and eſteem,

Your ſincere friend,

HENRY MOUBRAY.

The

The Marchioneſs DE BEAUMONT *to Madame* D'ORVAL, *Superior of the Abbaye de Remi.*

Paris.

INCLINATION, gratitude, and duty, all conſpire to influence my addreſſing you on this occaſion, my dear Madam. Only *my* pen ſhould announce the happineſs of her whoſe ſufferings you witneſſed, and mitigated. Others have informed you of the chain of events which induced the Marquis de Beaumont to addreſs me, and they have teſtified my ſenſe of your goodneſs when I was unable to do it. My happineſs is now complete, and your claim to my gratitude, your intereſt in my welfare, points out that I ſhould inform you of it. In the hour of bitter anguiſh, when I was deſerted by my family, torn from my friends, rejected, vilified, deſpiſed—when nature was ſinking under the accumulation of affliction,

affliction, your kindneſs ſoothed me, your protection ſuſtained me, and your evidence in my favour at length contributed to impreſs favourable ſentiments of me on one heart, and ſtrengthened his diſpoſition to vindicate me, and reſtore me to honour and to peace. Never, never, can I forget the cordial drop your goodneſs mingled in my bitter portion—the remembrance of its effect will lead me to beſtow all the conſolation in my power on the children of adverſity who apply to me for ſuccour. Thus, deareſt Madam, you will enjoy what to your heart will prove the moſt ſublime felicity, the reflection that your benevolence not only poured balm to a wounded mind, but ſtimulated, in its example, that heart to acts of beneficence and virtue; taught me to "wipe the tear from "ſorrow's ſtreaming eye," and to diffuſe to others the bleſſings I ſo largely enjoy. Two days ago I was united to the Marquis de Beaumont; the marriage was celebrated publicly. You will judge, dear

Madam,

Madam, how much averſe I was to this; but it was the wiſh of the Duke and Ducheſs—had been always a cuſtom in the family, therefore I could not oppoſe it. The *ceremony* was, however, performed only in the preſence of our families, and a few particular friends; one of the Marquis's, who came over with his bride and mother to honour the occaſion. I had heard much of Engliſh beauty, and that my charming friend, Madame de Lauſan, an inſtance that fame had been the herald of truth in the report; but when I ſaw Lady Auguſta Moubray, I found lovelineſs beyond what I could have conceived in a mortal form; every charm of countenance and figure is attended by every grace of manner. She is not only beautiful, but the elegance and dignity, conſpicuous in all ſhe does, commands a ſentiment, that congregates the higheſt degrees of admiration and reſpect. Had I not ſeen the Marquis, I ſhould have thought his friend, the Che-

valier Moubray, the moſt intereſting and amiable man I ever met. I hope and believe partiality does not prejudice me to ſpeak ſo earneſtly in praiſe of this incomparable pair, as they are laviſh of their applauſe and kindneſs in my reſpect. This might, perhaps, biaſs me; but, I aſſure you, my voice in their favour is that of all who approach them. My young friends at the convent will, I know, expect a deſcription of my nuptial dreſs; I cannot deny *them* any ſatisfaction who have given *me* ſo much; therefore will acquaint them it was a ſilver gauze, cloſe-bodied, with looſe ſleeves, confined round the middle of the arm with pearls and gold, wove on a ſapphire blue riband: the robe was trimmed with the ſame, and feſtooned at the top of the left ſide, acroſs to the bottom of the right, with bows and taſſels of blue riband, pearls, and gold beads: the petticoat was the ſame as the robe—the latter hung in a long full train behind;

on my head was placed, partly concealed among ſome curls, a coronet of immenſely large pearls, ſet in gold, (a preſent of my kind uncle;) from it hung down behind a ſort of veil, of a lighter ſilver gauze than the robe—it reached the bottom of my waiſt, around which was a girdle of blue riband, claſped with pearls and gold: this, with a pair of very fine pearl bracelets, completed my dreſs. Marianne, who loves a little finery in her heart, employed all her eloquence to perſuade me to wear ſome of the valuable diamonds which have been preſented to me, ſaying, it would not be a proper compliment to the Marquis if I did not. I was inexorable, however, for I do not approve the mixture of jewels; and, on ſuch an occaſion, much ſplendour would not have been appropriate, in my idea. He, whom it will ever be my firſt wiſh to pleaſe, marked his approbation of my choice of attire in the moſt flattering terms; therefore I was ſatisfied

with my election. We had a moſt magnificent ball in the evening—it was even honoured by the preſence of the Duke of Orleans, and his amiable Ducheſs. His Royal Highneſs led me out: only that my ſpirits were raiſed, by conſidering the occaſion, my union with the moſt amiable and beloved of men, or I could not have borne the univerſal gaze of ſuch a numerous aſſembly. We have had a crowd of viſitors ever ſince; but though they engage much time, I do not allow them to rob me of what others have a ſuperior claim to. I have devoted what was neceſſary to writing to you, my dear Madam, and I have viſited my ſiſter. It will be a pleaſure to you to know that ſhe begins to recover ſome degree of cheerfulneſs, and is reconciled to her fate. So total a change is produced in her mind, that ſhe entreated I would, if poſſible, indulge her with a ſight of me when dreſſed for my marriage. I would have declined it, from an apprehenſion of making her unhappy

happy—ſhe penetrated my motive, and, thanking me, ſaid, I might rely on it I had no cauſe to fear on that account, an entire revolution had taken place in her ſentiments; ſhe no longer conſidered rank, or ſplendour, as the means of true felicity; therefore, ſhe ſhould never be uneaſy at ſeeing another poſſeſs them; and as the Marquis had only been preferred, as he could beſtow them, ſhe ſhould not feel more uneaſineſs on the day of our union than any other: on the contrary, as ſhe ſincerely wiſhed my happineſs, ſhe ſhould welcome it, and begged, *as a proof of my confidence in her ſincerity*, that I would come, if poſſible. Her naming this ground, enforced compliance: I would not, on any conſideration, have wounded her, by giving a poſſibility for ſuſpecting I doubted her; I therefore went—ſhe received me with eaſe, complimented my choice, and obſerved on my ornaments in a manner, calculated to convince me I had not hurt her by my appearance on this occaſion.

ſion. Indeed, every circumſtance of her conduct tends to prove the change of her principles, and ſentiments. I am convinced that ſhe now loves me, wiſhes me happy, and thinks nobody can enjoy felicity but in the practice of virtue. She will not remain much longer in the convent now, I believe: her reſolution to ſeclude herſelf there gives way to Madame de Lauſan's arguments, my uncle's wiſhes, and the Chevalier D'Aubigné's entreaties: ſhe deſires only a little more time to decide on ſuch an important point as an union with her worthy lover, reſolving, ſhe ſays, if brought to conſent, to ſtipulate for an entire reſidence in a remote province. D'Aubigné will, I am ſure, indulge her, and peace will, I hope, attend her throughout life. In the poſſeſſion of every bleſſing that can be ſought for by mortals, ſurrounded by friends and relatives, as happy as myſelf—felicity, perfect and pure, is now mine. Oh! may proſperity be diveſted of the property attributed

tributed to it, in my reſpect; may I never find my heart hardened againſt thoſe who are leſs fortunate than myſelf; but ever contemplating the ſource from which every bleſſing proceeds, endeavour daily to become more worthy his protection, by performing every duty of the ſtation in which he has placed me. My dear mother, uncle, and Louiſa, (that ineſtimable friend) deſire me to preſent their reſpectful remembrance. Accept, deareſt Madam, the moſt heart-felt good wiſhes of

Your grateful and obedient
humble ſervant,

JULIA DE BEAUMONT.

FINIS.

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